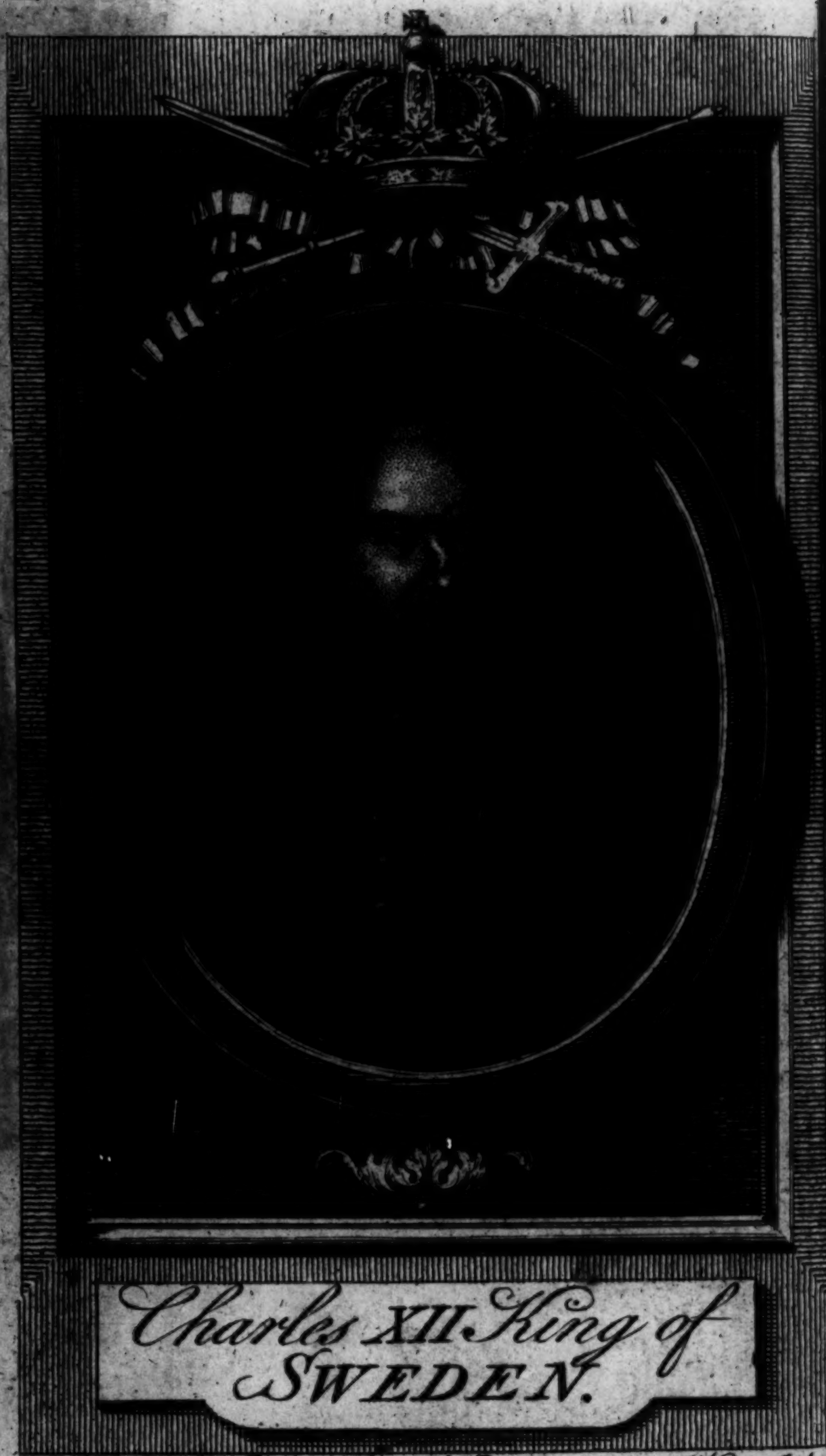


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THE  
HISTORY  
OF  
CHARLES XII.  
KING of SWEDEN.

BY  
Mr. DE VOLTAIRE,

Translated from the FRENCH.

THE SEVENTH EDITION.

With a complete INDEX.



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A  
DISCOURSE  
ON THE  
HISTORY  
OF  
CHARLES XII.

**F**EW are the Princes whose actions merit a particular history. In vain have most of them been the objects of slander or flattery; small is their number whose memory is preserved, and it would be more inconsiderable, were the good only remembered.

Those Princes have the best title to immortality, whose actions have benefited mankind. The affection of *Louis* the twelfth for his people will be had in remembrance as long as *France* endures. The many failings of



*Francis I.* will be excused for the sake of the arts and sciences of which he was the father. Blest will be the memory of *Henry IV.* who conquered his kingdom first by his valour, and then by his clemency. The generosity of *Louis XIV.* in protecting those arts which had their rise from *Francis I.* will be ever applauded.

A contrary reason preserves the memory of bad Princes, like that of fires, plagues and inundations.

Conquerors are a species between good Kings and Tyrants, but partake most of the latter, and have a glaring reputation. We are eager to know the most minute circumstances of their lives. Such is the miserable weakness of mankind, that they look with admiration upon persons glorious for mischief, and are better pleased to be talking of the destroyer



of CHARLES XII. w

stroyer than the founder of an Empire.

As for those Princes who have made no figure either in peace or war; who have neither been remarkable for great virtues, nor vices; their lives furnish so little matter either for imitation, or instruction, that they are not worthy of notice. Of so many Emperors of *Rome*, *Greece*, *Germany* and *Moscovy*; of so many Sultans, Caliphs, Popes and Kings, how few are there whose names deserve to be recorded any where, but in chronological tables, where they are of no other use but to mark the *Epochas* &

There is a *Vulgar* among Princes as well as among the rest of mankind; yet such is the itch of writing, that a Prince is no sooner dead but the world is immediately filled with Memoirs and Lives of him, and the secret histories of his Court. By these means Books have



been so multiplied, that were a man to live an hundred years, and employ them all in reading, he would not be able to run over all that has been published relating to the History of *Europe* for the two last Centuries.

This desire of transmitting such useless stories to posterity, and of fixing the attention of future ages upon the most common events, is owing to the weakness of those who have long lived in a court, and have had the misfortune to be engaged in publick affairs. They think the court they have lived in the finest; their King the greatest; and the affairs they have been concerned in the most important that ever were. And they imagine posterity will behold them in the same light.

If a Prince has had wars abroad, troubles or intrigues at home; if he buys  
the



the friendship of his neighbours or they purchase his ; if after some victories, or defeats, he makes peace ; his subjects are so dazzled with the glitter of these events, that they look upon their own as the most remarkable age since the creation : And what then ? This Prince dies ; new measures are taken ; the intrigues of his Court, his Mistresses, Ministers, Generals, Wars, nay he himself is forgotten.

Ever since Christian Princes have been tricking one another, making sometimes peace, sometimes war, they have signed abundance of treaties, and fought as many battles, done many glorious, and as many infamous actions. Yet should this heap of transactions be transmitted to posterity, they would most of them confound and destroy each other, and the memory of those



only would survive, which have occasioned great revolutions, or which, having been related by good authors, are preserved like pictures of obscure persons, only because they were drawn by a masterly hand.

A particular History of *Charles* the twelfth of *Sweden* had not increased this publick grievance, were it not that he and his rival *Peter Alexiowitz*, the greater man far of the two, must be allowed by all the world the most extraordinary persons who have been known for many ages. Yet was not the vain pleasure of telling strange stories our motive for undertaking this History; but the consideration of the benefit Princes may receive from this book, should it ever come into their hands.

Must not any King who reads the story of *Charles* the twelfth, be immediately



of CHARLES XII. ~~is~~

diately cured of the vanity of being a conqueror? Where is the Prince who can say, I have greater courage, more virtues, more resolution, more strength of body, greater skill in war, or better troops than *Charles* the twelfth? If with all these favourable circumstances and after so many victories he was so unfortunate, what may other Princes expect, who shall have as much ambition, with less capacity and fewer advantages?

This History is composed from the relations of some persons of distinction, who have spent several years with *Charles* the twelfth, and *Peter the Great*, Emperor of *Moscovy*; and retreating long after the death of those Princes, to a country of liberty, can have no interest in disguising the truth.

Nothing is advanced here but what is warranted by unquestionable eye wit-



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nesses; which makes this History very different from those *Gazettes* which have appeared under the title of Lives of *Charles* the twelfth.

Many little skirmishes between the *Moscovite* and *Swedish* Officers are omitted; for it is the life of the King of *Sweden*, not of his Officers, that is here designed; nay, and of his life we have only selected the most important events. The history of a Prince is not to tell all he ever did, but what he did deserving to be known to future ages.

It is proper to remark, that many things which were true in 1728, the time of writing this History, are not so at present. For instance; trade is more encouraged than it was in *Sweden*. The *Polish* infantry have regimental clothes, and are better disciplined: For in history the time in which an Author wrote ought



ought to be considered. To read only the Memoirs of the Cardinal *de Retz*, one would really take the *French* nation for a set of enthusiasts, breathing nothing but faction, madness and civil war. To read the History of the fortunate years of *Louis* the fourteenth, one would judge them a people born only for obedience, conquest, and the polite arts. And whosoever shall see any Memoirs of the first years of *Louis* the fifteenth will find the *French* entirely devoted to luxury and avarice, and quite regardless of every thing else.

The present *Spaniards* are not the *Spaniards* of *Charles* the fifth, and yet they may deserve that character in a few years. The *English* of this age no more resemble the *Fanatics* in *Cromwell's* time, than the Monks and *Monsignori*, who fill the streets of *Rome*, are like the



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ancient *Scipio's*. I doubt whether the *Swedish* troops would suddenly be so formidable as those of *Charles* the XIIth. We say of a man, that he was brave at such a time; and so we may say of a nation, they were so and so in such a year, or under such an administration.

If any Prince or Minister of state should meet with disagreeable truths in this book, let them consider that as they act in a publick capacity, they are obliged to give an account of their actions to the publick. Such is the price of greatness. 'Tis the business of history to record, not to flatter; and the only way to oblige mankind to speak well of us is to do good to them.

THE







A Map  
for the History  
of  
CHARLES XII.





THE  
HISTORY  
OF  
CHARLES XII.  
KING of SWEDEN.

BOOK I.

The CONTENTS.

An abridgment of the history of Sweden, to Charles XII. His education and enemies. The character of the Czar, Peter Alexio-witz; his enterprizes and designs. Charles is at once attacked by Moscovy, Poland, and Denmark. He leaves Stockholm at sixteen years old, and with eight thousand Swedes defeats an hundred thousand Moscovites.

Sweden and Finland make up a Kingdom one third part bigger than France, but far less fruitful, and at present less populous. This country, which is about two hundred of our leagues broad, and three hundred long, extends from south to north, from the 55th degree of latitude to the 70th, in a very severe climate, which



which scarce knows the returns of spring or autumn. The winter prevails there nine months in the year; the heats of summer immediately succeed to an excessive cold; and the frosts are renewed in the month of *October*, without any of those insensible gradations, which in other countries usher in the seasons, and render the alteration more agreeable. But nature in return has given them a serene sky, and a pure air. The almost constant heat of the summer produces flowers and fruits in a very short time; and the long nights of winter are temper'd by the evening and morning twilights, which last in proportion to the sun's distance from *Sweden*: And the light of the moon, which is not obscured by any cloud, but rather increased by the reflexion of the snow, which covers the ground, and very often by the *Aurora Borealis*, makes it as commodious to travel in *Sweden* by night as by day. The cattle are smaller there, than in the southern parts of *Europe*, for want of pasturage; but the men are larger. The pure Air they breathe gives them health, and the rigour of the climate strength; they even live to a greater age than other men, if not infeeble by the immoderate use of wines and strong liquors, which the northern nations seem to be the more fond of, the less nature has indulged them with those productions.

The *Swedes* are well made, strong and active, capable of sustaining the severest labours, hunger, and want; they are warriors from their infancy, high-spirited, with more courage than industry, having long neglected, and at present making slow advances in their improvements of commerce, which alone can supply them with what their cli-



mate denies them. 'Twas principally from *Sweden*, one part of which is yet called *Gothland*, that the swarm of *Goths* issued, which like a deluge overspread the face of *Europe*, and wrested it from the hands of the *Roman* Emperors, who for the space of five hundred years had usurped the dominion of, and tyranniz'd over it.

The northern nations at that time were far more populous than they are at present; as their religion by admitting a plurality of wives allowed the inhabitants a liberty of furnishing the state with more subjects; and as the women themselves knew no reproach but that of barrenness and idleness; and being as laborious and as strong as the men, they bore children earlier and longer.

*Sweden* was always free, 'till about the middle of the fourteenth century. In so long a space of time there were several revolutions in the government, but the innovations were always in favour of liberty. Their chief magistrate had the name of King, a title which in different countries is attended with very different powers: For in *France* and *Spain* it carries with it the notion of absolute dominion, and in *Poland*, *Sweden* and *England*, that of limited. This King could do nothing without the Senate, and the Senate depended upon the States General, who were often called together. The representatives of the nation in these great assemblies were the nobility, the Bishops, the deputies of towns, and in process of time, the very peasants were incorporated into that assembly, a class of people, in other places, unjustly despised, and enslaved almost throughout all the north.

About the year 1492, this nation so jealous of its liberty, and which yet values itself upon the  
reputa-



reputation of having conquered *Rome* thirteen hundred years ago, was brought into subjection by a woman, and a people less powerful than the *Swedes*.

*Margaret of Valdemar*, the *Semiramis* of the north, and Queen of *Denmark* and *Norway*, conquered *Sweden* by force and stratagem, and united those three large dominions into one Kingdom. After her decease *Sweden* was rent by civil wars, alternately shook off the *Danish* yoke, and submitted to it; was sometimes governed by Kings, and sometimes by administrators. About the year 1520, it was horribly oppressed by two tyrants at the same time. The one was *Christiern* the second, King of *Denmark*, a monster made up of vices, without the least intermixture of virtue; the other was an Archbishop of *Upsal*, Primate of the Kingdom, and as cruel as *Christiern*. These two by agreement seized in one day upon the consuls, the magistrates of *Stockholm*, and ninety four Senators, and caused them to be executed by the common hangman, under pretence that they were excommunicated by the Pope for having defended the rights of the State against the Archbishop. Then they gave up the city to plunder, and the inhabitants were butchered, without distinction of age or sex.

Whilst these two men combined to oppress, and disagreeing only in dividing the spoil, were employed in the most tyrannical exercise of arbitrary power, and the utmost cruelties of revenge, a new event changed the face of affairs in the north.

*Gustavus Vasa*, a young man descended of the ancient race of the Kings of that country, arises from the forests of *Dalcarlia*, where he lay concealed, and takes upon him the deliverance of *Sweden*.



*Sweden.* He was one of those great genius's, whom nature so rarely forms, and who are born with all the qualifications necessary to govern mankind. The advantage of an amiable person and his majestic air gained him followers from the first moment of his appearance. His eloquence, which receiv'd an additional force from the agreeableness of his manner, was the more persuasive, as it was less artful. His enterprizing genius form'd such designs as appear rash to the vulgar, and are only brave in the eyes of great men, and which however difficult his indefatigable courage constantly crowned with success. He was intrepid with prudence, calm in an age of cruelty, and 'tis said as virtuous as the head of a party can be.

*Gustavus Vaza* had been the hostage of *Christiern*, and detained a prisoner against the law of nations. Upon his escape he wandered about the mountains and woods of *Dalecarlie* disguised like a peasant. He was even reduced to the necessity of working in the copper-mines for the support of life, and his better concealment. But thus buried as he was under ground, he had the magnanimity to entertain thoughts of dethroning the tyrant. He discovered himself to the peasants, and presently appeared to them a person of a superior nature, to whom the common sort of men are naturally inclined to submit. And in a little time he train'd up those savages into a well-disciplined body of troops. He gave battle to *Christiern* and the Archbishop, gained several victories over them, and drove them both out of *Sweden*; and at last was very justly chosen by the States King of that country, of which he was already the deliverer.

He was scarce settled upon the throne, before he



he entered upon another design more difficult than his conquests. The real tyrants of the state were the Bishops, who being possess'd of almost all the riches in *Sweden*, had employed their wealth to oppress the subject, and make war upon their Kings. This power was the more formidable, as the ignorance of the people had made it sacred. He punished the *Romish* religion for the crimes of its ministers, and in less than two years introduced *Lutheranism* into *Sweden*, more by the dexterity of his management, than by his authority. And having thus conquered the Kingdom, as he said, from the *Danes* and the Clergy, he reigned prosperous and absolute till he was seventy years of age, dying full of glory, and leaving his family and religion in possession of the throne.

One of his descendants was that *Gustavus Adolphus*, whom they call the *Great Gustavus*. He conquered *Ingria*, *Livonia*, *Bremen*, *Verden*, *Wismar*, and *Pomerania*, without reckoning up above an hundred places in *Germany*, which were given back by *Sweden* after his death. He shook the throne of *Ferdinand II.* and protected the *Lutherans* in *Germany*; wherein he was privately assisted by *Rome* itself; which stood far more in awe of the Emperor's power, than that of heresy. This was the Prince who by his victories effectually contributed to the depression of the house of *Austria*, though the glory of that transaction was given to Cardinal *Richlieu*; who knew well how to procure himself the reputation of those great actions, which *Gustavus* was contented with barely performing. He was upon the point of carrying his arms beyond the *Danube*, and perhaps of dethroning the Emperor, when he was killed in the



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the thirty seventh year of his age, at the battle of *Lutzen*, which he gained against *Walstein*, carrying with him to the grave the name of great, the lamentations of the north, and the esteem of his enemies.

His daughter *Christina*, a lady of an extraordinary genius, chose rather to converse with men of learning, than to reign over a people, whose knowledge was confined to war. She became as illustrious for quitting the throne, as her ancestors had been for conquering or securing it. The protestants have been too severe upon her memory, as if no person could be possessed of great virtues without adhering to *Luther*; and the Papists have triumphed too much in the conversion of a woman, whose greatest qualification was her philosophy. She retired to *Rome*, where she passed the remainder of her days among the sciences she loved, and for which she had renounced the crown at the age of twenty seven years.

Before her abdication she engag'd the States of *Sweden* to elect her cousin *Charles Gustavus X.* son to the Count *Palatine*, and Duke of *Deux Ponts* to succeed her. This Prince added new conquests to those of *Gustavus Adolphus*; he immediately carried his arms into *Poland*, where he was victorious in the celebrated battle of *Warsaw*, which lasted for three days. He for a long time was engaged in a successful war against the *Danes*; he besieged them in their capital, reunited *Schonen* to *Sweden*, and settled the Duke of *Holstein* in the possession of *Sleswick*, at least for a time; at length having experienced some of the inconstancies of fortune, and made peace with his enemies, he turn'd his ambition against his subjects, and laid the



the design of establishing an arbitrary power in Sweden, but was cut off in the thirty seventh year of his age, like the great *Gustavus*, without completing his project, which his Son *Charles XI.* was so happy as to accomplish.

*Charles XI.* was a soldier like his ancestors, but more absolute than them all. He abolished the authority of the Senate, which was declared to be the Senate of the King, and not of the Kingdom. He was frugal, vigilant, and indefatigable; qualifications which would have endeared him to all, if his tyranny had not gained him the dread, rather than the affection of his subjects.

In 1680, he married *Ulric Eleonora*, daughter to *Frederick III.* King of Denmark, a Princess distinguished by her virtue, and worthy of greater confidence than her husband reposed in her. Of this marriage on the 27th of June 1682, was born King *Charles XII.* a man the most extraordinary, perhaps, that ever appeared in the world. All the great qualities of his ancestors were united in him; nor had he any other fault or misfortune, but that he carried them beyond all bounds. 'Tis of him therefore we now propose to write what is come to our knowledge, concerning his person and his actions.

At six years of age he was taken from the women, and placed under the tuition of Mr. *de Norodpenser*, a man of wisdom and experience. The first book he was made to read was *Puffendorf's* introduction to the history of Europe, that he might have an early knowledge of his own dominions, and those of his neighbours. He afterwards learnt the German language, which he always spoke for the future, as well as his mother tongue. At seven years of



of age, he could manage a horse; and the violent exercises he delighted in, and which discover'd his inclinations to war, laid the early foundations of a vigorous constitution, which enabled him to support the fatigues his natural disposition inclined him to undergo.

Though good natured in his infancy, he discovered an invincible obstinacy; the only way to gain upon him was to touch upon his honour; if they named but glory, they could obtain anything from him. He had a great aversion to learn *Latin*; but when they told him, that the Kings of *Poland* and *Denmark* understood it, he soon applied himself to that language, and retained so much of it as enabled him to speak it all the rest of his life. They endeavoured to engage him to learn *French* after the same manner; but he could not be prevailed upon, so long as he lived, ever to make use of it, not even with the *French* Ambassadors, who understood no other language.

As soon as he had some little knowledge in *Latin*, they made him translate *Quintus Curtius*; and he took a fancy to that book, which the subject inspired him with rather than the style. The person who explained this author to him, having asked him what he thought of *Alexander*, "I think," says the Prince, "that I would be like him;" but says the other, "He lived but two and thirty years." "Ah," replies he, "and is not that enough, when one has conquered Kingdoms?" They did not fail to carry these answers to the King his father, who, upon hearing them would cry out, "This child will excel me, and even go beyond the great *Gustavus*." One day he was diverting himself in the King's apartment with looking upon two plans, the



the one of a town in *Hungary*, taken by the *Turks* from the Emperor, and the other of *Riga* the capital of *Livonia*, a province conquered by the *Swedes* about a century ago. Under the plan of the town in *Hungary* were these words taken from the book of *Job*, *The Lord gave it to me, the Lord hath taken it from me; blessed be the name of the Lord.* The young Prince, upon reading this, straight took a pencil, and wrote under the plan of *Riga*, *The Lord hath given it to me, and the Devil shall not take it from me.* Thus in the most indifferent actions of his childhood some little traces of his resolute disposition would often fall from him, which discovered what he would one day be.

He was eleven years old, when he lost his mother. This Princess<sup>d</sup> died on the 5th of *August*, 1693. of a distemper which arose from the inquietudes her husband had given her, and her own endeavours to conceal them. *Charles XI.* had stripped a great number of his subjects of their wealth, by the ministration of a certain court of justice, called the chamber of liquidations, erected by his sole authority. A multitude of citizens, nobility and tradesmen, farmers, widows and orphans, ruined by that chamber, filled the streets of *Stockholm*, and daily uttered their fruitless complaints at the gate of the palace. The Queen assisted the distressed with all she had in her possession. She gave them her money, her jewels, her furniture, and even her very clothes. And when she had no more to bestow, she threw herself in tears at her husband's feet, and besought him to have pity upon his subjects. The King gravely answered, "Madam, we have taken you to bring us children, not to give us advice;" and from that time he treated her with a severity that shortened her days.

He



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He died himself within four years after her, on the 15th of *April* 1697, in the forty second year of his age, and the thirty seventh of his reign, at a time when the *Empire*, *Spain* and *Holland* on the one side, and *France* on the other, were prepared to remit the decision of their disputes to his mediation, and when he had already plan'd out overtures of peace between those powers.

He left to his son, then fifteen years old, a throne secured and respected abroad; subjects poor, but valiant and loyal; a treasury in good order, and managed by able Ministers.

*Charles XII.* upon his coming to the crown, not only found himself absolute and undisturbed master of *Sweden* and *Finland*, but also of *Livonia*, *Carelia*, and *Ingria*; he was also possessed of *Rismar*, *Wibourg*, the isles of *Rugen*, *Oesel*, and the most beautiful part of *Pomerania*, with the Duchy of *Bremen* and *Verden*, all the conquests of his ancestors, and secured to the crown by long possession, and the solemn treaties of *Munster* and *Oliva*, supported by the terror of the *Swedish* arms. The peace of *Ryswick*, begun under the direction of the father, was concluded under that of the son, and he found himself the mediator of *Europe*, from the first moment of his reign.

The laws of *Sweden* fix the majority of their Kings to the age of fifteen years. But *Charles XI.* who was entirely absolute, put off the majority of his son by his last will 'till he should come to be eighteen; and by this disposition he favoured the ambitious views of his mother *Eduiga-Eleonora* of *Holstein*, the dowager of *Charles X.* who was appointed by the King her son to be guardian to the young



young King her grandson, and regent of the Kingdom, in conjunction with a council of five persons.

She immediately gave orders that the funeral of her son *Charles XI.* should be solemnized with a magnificence to which *Sweden* had never been accustomed; and farther required that the citizens of *Stockholm* should mourn for him full three years. It seemed as if she would force them to a greater expression of external grief, as they were less inwardly concerned for the loss of a Prince, who had taken from them their liberty and their substance.

The Regent had born a share in the administration under the reign of the King her son. She was now advanced in years; but her ambition, which was by far superior to her abilities, made her hope to enjoy long the sweets of power under the King her grandson. She kept him as much as she could from intermeddling with business. The young Prince usually passed his time in hunting, or reviewing his troops, and would sometimes even exercise with them: These amusements seemed only the natural effect of the vivacity of his age. He discovered no dissatisfaction in his conduct, which could give the Regent any uneasiness, and she flattered herself that his spirits would be so dissipated by these exercises as to render him incapable of application, and give her the opportunity of governing the longer.

One day in the month of *November*, the same year that his father died, when he had been taking a review of several regiments, and *Piper* the counsellor of state stood by him, the King appeared quite lost in a depth of thought. "May I take the liberty," says *Piper* to him, of asking your Majesty



“ Majesty upon what it is that your thoughts are  
“ so seriously imployed ? ” “ I am thinking,” an-  
swers the King, “ that I am capable of command-  
“ ing those brave fellows yonder, and don’t care  
“ that either they or I should receive orders from  
“ a woman.” *Piper* immediately laid hold on  
the opportunity of raising his fortune, and know-  
ing his own interest insufficient to venture on so  
dangerous an enterprise as the removal of the Queen  
from the regency, and hastening the King’s majority,  
he proposed the affair to Count *Axel Sparre*, who  
was a man of spirit, and sought to make himself  
considerable : He flattered him with the thought of  
being made the King’s confident, which *Sparre* very  
easily believ’d, took the whole upon himself, and  
laboured for none but *Piper*. The counsellors of  
the regency were soon drawn into the scheme, and  
hastily proceeded to the execution of it, that they  
might thereby the more readily recommend them-  
selves to the King’s esteem.

They went in a body to propose it to the Queen,  
who did not in the least expect such a declaration.  
The States General were then assembled, and the  
counsellors of the regency laid the matter before  
them. They were all unanimous in their appro-  
bation, and the point was carried with a rapidity,  
that nothing could withstand; so that *Charles XII.*  
did but wish to reign, and in three days the States  
conferred the government upon him. The Queen’s  
power and interest fell in an instant, and she after-  
wards led a private life, which was more suitable  
to her age, though less to her humour. The  
King was crowned on the 24th of *December* fol-  
lowing. He made his entry into *Stockholm* upon  
a sorrel horse, shod with silver, having a Scepter in



his hand, and a crown upon his head, amidst the acclamations of a whole people, adorers of every novelty, and forming to themselves great expectations from a young Prince.

The ceremony of the consecration and coronation belongs to the Archbishop of *Upsal*, and is almost the only privilege remaining to him among so many as were claim'd by his predecessors. After having anointed the King according to custom, whilst he was holding the crown in his hands, in order to put it upon his head, *Charles* snatched it hastily from the Archbishop, and crown'd himself, looking sternly all the while upon the poor Prelate. The crowd, who are always easily imposed on by an air of grandeur, applauded this action of the King. Even those, who had groaned most under the tyranny of the Father, were betray'd into the folly of praising in the Son that stern behaviour which was the presage of their slavery.

As soon as *Charles* was become master of the government, he gave his ear and the management of affairs to counsellor *Piper*, who was in reality his first Minister, though he wanted the name. He soon after created him a Count, which is a dignity of great eminence in *Sweden*, and not an empty title, to be taken up without any consequence.

The beginning of the King's administration did not raise any favourable ideas of him; he seemed to have been more impatient after rule, than deserving of it. He had indeed no dangerous passion; but there was nothing to be observed in his conduct, except the transports of youth and obstinacy. He appeared proud and careless of business. Even the Ambassadors, who resided at his court, took him for a person of a mean capacity, and represented



presented him as such to their masters. The *Suedes* had entertained the same opinion of him themselves, so that no one as yet knew his real character; he was not even acquainted with it himself, 'till the storms, which gathered all at once in the north, furnished him with an opportunity of displaying those great talents which as yet lay conceal'd.

Three powerful Princes, taking the advantage of his youth, conspir'd his ruin almost at the same instant. The first was *Frederick IV.* King of *Denmark* his cousin; the second *Augustus*, Elector of *Saxony*, and King of *Poland*; *Peter* the Great, Czar of *Moscovy*, was the third and the most dangerous. It will be necessary to lay open the original of these wars which produced such great events; and to begin with *Denmark*.

Of the two sisters of *Charles XII.* the eldest was married to the Duke of *Holstein*, a young Prince of great courage and good nature. The Duke, oppressed by the King of *Denmark*, came to *Stockholm* with his Princess, to throw himself into the King's protection, and ask his assistance, not only as he was his brother-in-law, but as King of a nation, which bore an irreconcilable hatred to the *Danes*.

The ancient House of *Holstein*, sunk into that of *Oldenburgh*, had been advanced to the throne of *Denmark* by election in 1449. All the kingdoms of the north were at that time elective: But the kingdom of *Denmark* soon after became hereditary. One of the Kings named *Christiern III.* had so great an affection for his brother *Adolphus*, as we scarce ever find an instance of amongst Princes. He knew not how to let him live without the exercise of sovereign power, and yet he could not dismem-



ber his own dominions. He divided with him by a most extravagant agreement the dutchies of *Holstein-Gottorp*, and *Sleswick*. The descendants of *Adolphus* were ever after to govern in *Holstein* in conjunction with the Kings of *Denmark*, so that the two dutchies were to belong to them both in common, and the King of *Denmark* to do nothing in *Holstein* without the Duke, nor the Duke without the King. So strange an union, of which we have yet had a parallel instance in the same family within these few years, was for near fourscore years the constant occasion of disputes between the branch of *Denmark*, and that of *Holstein Gottorp*; the Kings endeavouring always to oppress the Dukes, and the Dukes to be independent. It had cost the last Duke his liberty and sovereignty; but he recovered both at the conferences of *Altena*, in 1689, by the interposition of *Sweden*, *England*, and *Holland*, who were guarantees for the execution of the treaty. But, as a treaty between Princes is frequently no more than a submission to necessity, 'till such time as the stronger is able to oppress the weaker, the dispute was revived with more virulence than ever between the new King of *Denmark* and the young Duke. And whilst the Duke was at *Stockholm*, the Dane had already committed some acts of hostility in the country of *Holstein*, and entred into a private league with the King of *Poland*, to fall upon the King of *Sweden* himself.

*Frederick Augustus*, Elector of *Saxony*, whom neither the eloquence and negotiations of the *Abbe de Polignac*, nor the great qualifications of the Prince of *Conti*, his competitor for the crown, could set aside from being elected King of *Poland* about



about two years before, was a Prince still less famous for his incredible strength of body, than for his bravery and gallantry of mind. His court made the greatest figure of any in *Europe* next to that of *Lewis XIV.* No Prince was ever more generous or liberal, nor distributed his favours with a better grace. He had bought one half of the voices of the *Polish* nobility, and forced the other by the approach of a *Saxon* army. He judged it necessary to have his troops about him for the better security of his throne; but he wanted a pretence for retaining them in *Poland*. These therefore were designed to be sent against the King of *Sweden* in *Livonia*, upon the occasion I am now going to relate.

*Livonia*, the most beautiful and fruitful province of the north, belong'd formerly to the Knights of the *Teutonic* Order. The *Moscovites*, *Poles*, and *Swedes*, had since severally disputed the possession of it. But *Sweden* had enjoy'd it for near an hundred years, and was solemnly confirmed in it by the peace of *Oliva*.

The late King *Charles XI.* in the exercise of his severities towards his subjects had not spared the *Livonians*. He had taken from them their privileges, and part of their estates. *Patkul*, who has since been unhappily famous for his tragical death, was deputed by the Nobility of *Livonia* to bear to the throne the complaints of the province. He address'd his master in a manner very respectful, and full of that masculine eloquence, which calamity inspires, when joined with courage; but Princes too often look upon publick addresses as vain ceremonies, which it is customary to endure, without paying any regard to them. However *Charles XI.*



who knew how to dissemble, when he did not give himself up to the transports of his passion, gently struck *Patkul* upon the shoulder; "You have spoke for your country, says he, like a brave man, and I love you for it, go on." But within a few days after he caused him to be declared guilty of high-treason, and as such to be condemned. *Patkul*, who had hid himself, made his escape, and carried his resentments with him into *Poland*. He was afterwards admitted into the presence of King *Augustus*. *Charles XI.* was dead, but the sentence of *Patkul* and his indignation yet survived. He represented to the King of *Poland* how easy it was to conquer *Livonia*; the people in despair, and ready to shake off the *Swedish* yoke; the King a child, and unable to defend himself. These solicitations were well received by a Prince, already tempted with the hopes of this conquest. All was immediately prepared for a sudden invasion, without even recourse had to the vain formality of declarations and manifestos. The storm grew thick at the same time on the side of *Moscow*.

*Peter Alexiowitz*, Czar of *Russia*, had already made himself formidable by the battle he had gained over the *Turks* in 1697, and by the conquest of *Asoph*, which opened to him the empire of the *Black Sea*. But it was by actions far more glorious than his conquests, that he merited the name of Great. *Moscow* or *Russia* takes in the north of *Asia*, and of *Europe*, and from the frontiers of *China* extends fifteen hundred leagues to the borders of *Poland* and *Sweden*. And yet this immense country was scarce known to *Europe* before the Czar *Peter*. The *Moscovites* were less civilized than



than the *Mexicans*, when discovered by *Cortez*: Born the slaves of masters as barbarous as themselves, they were sunk in a deep ignorance of all arts and sciences, and in such an insensibility of their use, as prevented all industry in the cultivation of them. An old law held sacred by them forbade them under pain of death to go out of their country without the leave of their Patriarch. And yet this law, made on purpose to take from them all opportunities of growing sensible of their bondage, was acceptable to a nation, which, in the depth of its ignorance and misery, disdained all commerce with foreign nations.

The *Era* of the *Moscowites* began with the creation of the world: They reckoned up 7207 years at the beginning of the last century, without being able to give any reason why they did so. The first day of their year answered to the 13th of our month of *September*. And they alledged this reason for it, that it was probable that God created the world in autumn, in the season when the fruits of the earth are in their full maturity. Thus the only appearances of knowledge they had among them were founded upon gross mistakes; not one of them had the least apprehension that the autumn of *Moscow* might be the spring of another country in opposite climates. Nor is it long since the people at *Moscow* would have burnt the secretary of a *Persian* ambassador, because he had foretold an eclipse of the sun. They did not so much as know the use of figures, but in all their computations made use of little beads, which were strung upon wire; nor had they any other way of reckoning in all their counting-houses, nor even in the treasury of the Czar.



Their religion was, and still is, that of the *Greek Church*, but intermixed with superstitions, to which they more firmly adhered in proportion to their extravagance, and the heavier weight of their yoke. Few *Moscovites* would venture to eat a pigeon, because the *Holy Ghost* is painted in form of a dove. They regularly observed four lents in a year, and in those times of abstinence dared not presume to eat either eggs or milk. God and St. *Nicholas* were the objects of their worship, and next to them the Czar and the *Patriarch*. The authority of the last was as boundless as their ignorance. He gave sentences of death, and inflicted the most cruel punishments, without any appeal from his tribunal. Twice a year he made a solemn procession on horseback, attended by all his clergy. The Czar on foot held his horse's bridle, and the people in the streets fell prostrate upon their faces before him, as the *Tartars* before their grand *Lama*. Confession was in use amongst them, but only in case of the greatest crimes; and then absolution was held necessary, but not repentance. They looked upon themselves as pure before God, as soon as they had received the benediction of their *Papas*. Thus they passed without remorse from confession to theft and murder; and what lays a restraint upon other Christians was with them an encouragement to wickedness. They made a scruple of drinking milk upon a fast-day; but masters of families, priests, married women, and maids, would not fail to intoxicate themselves with brandy upon a festival. They had religious disputes however among them as in other countries, but their greatest controversy was whether laymen should make the sign of the cross with



two fingers or three; and one *Jacob Nursoff* in the preceding reign had raised a sedition in *Astracan* upon the occasion of this dispute.

The Czar in his vast dominions had many other subjects, who were not Christians. The *Tartars*, who inhabit the western coasts of the *Caspian* sea, and the *Palus Mæotis*, were Mahometans. The *Siberians*, *Ostiacks*, and *Samoides*, who live near the frozen sea, were savages, some of them idolaters, and others without the least notion of a God; and yet the *Swedes*, who were sent prisoners amongst them, were better pleas'd with their manners, than with those of the ancient *Moscovites*.

*Peter Alexiowitz* had received an education, that even tended to encrease the barbarity, which then prevail'd in that part of the world.

His happy disposition inclined him to care for strangers, before he knew whether he should ever be the better for them. A young gentleman named *le Fort*, of an ancient family in *Geneva*, and whose father was a druggist, was the first person whose instrumentality the Czar afterwards employed to change the face of affairs in *Moscow*. This young man was sent by his father in the station of a factor to *Copenhagen*, where he soon quitted his commerce, to attend a *Danish* Ambassador to *Moscow*, being tempted to such an extravagant expedition by a dissatisfaction of mind, which is always inseparable from those, who fancy themselves above the employment they are bred to. His curiosity prompted him to learn the *Russian* language, in which he soon made such a surprizing progress, as caused him to be taken notice of, even by the Czar himself, who was then in his youth.



He insinuated himself into a familiarity with that Monarch, and soon engaged himself in his service. In his conversation with the Emperor he frequently expatiated on the advantages of trade and navigation. He told him how *Holland*, which was not the hundredth part of the dominions of *Moscow*, by trade only made as considerable a figure in *Europe* as *Spain* itself, to which it had formerly been a little useless and despised province. He discoursed to him of the refined policy of the Princes of *Europe*, the discipline of their troops, the government of their towns, the infinite number of manufactures, arts, and sciences, which make the *Europeans* powerful and happy. This discourse awakened the young Emperor, as it were, from a profound lethargy. His mighty genius, which a barbarous education had checked, but could not destroy, broke out almost all of a sudden. He resolved to act the man, to govern men, and to form a new nation. Several Princes before him had renounced their thrones out of a dislike to the fatigues of publick business; but no one ever put off his Royalty that he might learn to reign the better, like *Peter* the Great. He left *Moscow* in 1698, before he had reigned two years, and took a journey into *Holland* disguised under a vulgar name, as a domestic servant of the said Mr. *le Fort*, whom he appointed his Ambassador extraordinary to the States General. When he came to *Amsterdam*, he entered himself in the roll of shipcarpenters of the admiralty of the *Indies*, under the name of *Peter Micaelof*, and wrought upon the stocks like the common workmen. In his leisure hours he learnt those parts of mathematicks as might be useful to a Prince, such for instance as related



lated to fortification, navigation, and the art of drawing plans. He went into the workmens shops, examined all their manufactures, and let nothing escape his observation. From thence he passed into *England*, where he perfected himself in the Art of building ships, and returning into *Holland*, he carefully observed whatever might turn to the advantage of his country. At length after two years of travel and labour, which no one but himself would have submitted to, he appeared again in *Moscovy*, with all the arts of *Europe* in his train. Artists of all kinds followed in abundance; and then were first seen large *Moscovite* vessels upon the *Black Sea*, in the *Baltick* and the Ocean. Buildings of a regular and noble architecture rose in the midst of the *Russian* huts. He founded colleges, academies, printing-houses, and libraries. Forms of government were introduced into the great towns; their habits and customs were changed by little and little, though not without difficulty; and the *Moscovites* learnt by degrees what society was. Their very superstitions were abolished, the dignity of the Patriarch suppressed, and the Czar declared Head of the Church, which last attempt, though it would have cost a less absolute Prince his throne and his life, yet succeeded in him almost without opposition, and secured to him the success of all his other innovations.

At the same time he gave rise to commerce in his dominions. His views enlarging in proportion as he changed the face of his country, he had no sooner established trade, than he undertook to make *Moscovy* one day the center of the commerce of *Asia* and *Europe*. The *Wolga*, *Tanais*, and *Duna*, were to be united by canals, of which he himself drew



the plan. Thus he proposed to open new ways from the *Baltick* to the *Euxine* and *Caspian* seas, and from those two seas to the northern ocean. Nor was it enough to change the face of nature in his dominions; the manners of his subjects were to be changed too, which was by far the more difficult task; and above all, he wanted troops well disciplined and inur'd to war. 'Tis true, he had given some blows to the *Ottoman* power; but then he had only beaten *Tartars*, who were as ill disciplined as his own soldiers. To the character of founder and legislator of his empire, (and more happy and greater perhaps he would have been, had he been content with those two titles) he longed to join that of conqueror. *Ingria*, which lyes on the north-east of *Livonia*, had formerly belonged to the *Czars*; but from the time that *Gustavus Adolphus* had conquered those two provinces, the *Swede* had been in the quiet possession of them both. The *Czar* was impatient to revive those rights, which had been given up by his ancestors. Besides, he wanted a port on the east-side of the *Baltick* sea for the execution of his great designs. He therefore concluded a league with the *King of Poland*, to take away from the *Swede* whatever he possessed in those countries, which lye between the gulph of *Finland*, the *Baltick* sea, *Poland*, and *Moscovy*.

These then were the enemies, which were preparing all together to attack the infancy of *Charles XII*.

The confused whispers of these preparations alarmed the *King's* council, and they deliberated upon them in his presence; and as some of them were proposing to divert the storm by negotiations,

*Charles*



Charles rising from his seat with an air of gravity and resolution, "Gentlemen, says he, I am resolved never to enter upon an unjust war, nor to put an end to a just one but by the destruction of my enemies. My resolution is fixed. I will attack the first who shall declare against me, and when I have conquered him, I may hope to strike a terror into the rest." These words astonished all the old counsellors, they looked upon one another without daring to reply, and at last, ashamed to hope less than their King, they received his orders for the war with admiration.

They were still more surprized, when they saw him of a sudden renounce all the most innocent amusements of youth. From the moment he prepared for war, he entered upon a new course of life, from which he never after departed even for a moment. Full of the idea of *Alexander* and *Cæsar*, he proposed to imitate those two conquerors in every thing but their vices. He no more indulged himself in magnificence, sports, and recreations; he reduced his table to the utmost frugality. He had been fond of gaiety and dress, but was ever after clad like a common soldier. It was thought he had entertained a passion for a lady of his court; but whether the suspicion was just or no, 'tis certain he renounced all conversation with that sex for ever after; not only out of apprehension of being enslaved to them, but to give the soldiers an example of his resolution to restrain himself to the severest discipline, or it may be through the vanity of being the sole Prince who knew how to suppress an inclination so difficult to be conquered. He determined also to



to abstain from wine all the rest of his life; not, as has been pretended, to punish himself for an excess, which, as they say, led him into some irregularities unworthy of himself. Nothing is more absolutely false than this vulgar report; he never suffered wine to get the mastery over his reason, but it over-heated his constitution, which was warm enough already; he soon after left off beer too, and confin'd himself to pure water. Besides, temperance was a virtue till then unknown in the north, and he was desirous of being a model to the Swedes in every particular.

He began with assuring his brother-in-law, the Duke of *Holstein*, of assistance. Eight thousand men were immediately sent into *Pomerania*, a province not far from *Holstein*, to strengthen the Duke against the attacks of the *Danes*. And the Duke indeed had need of them. His dominions were already ravaged, the castle of *Gottorp* taken, and the town of *Tonningen* pressed by a close siege, to which the King of *Denmark* was come in person, to enjoy a conquest he thought secure. This small spark began to inflame the empire. On one side the *Saxon* troops of the King of *Poland*, those of *Brandenbourg*, *Wolfembuttel*, and *Hesse-Cassel* marched to join the *Danes*. On the other, the King of *Sweden's* eight thousand men, the troops of *Hanover* and *Zell*, and three *Dutch* regiments, marched to assist the Duke. Whilst the little country of *Holstein* was thus made the theatre of the war, two squadrons, the one from *England*, and the other from *Holland*, appeared in the *Baltick*. These two Estates were guarantees of the treaty of *Altena*, which the *Danes* had broken: They were eager to relieve the oppressed Duke,



Duke, because the interest of their trade was incompatible with the growing power of the King of *Denmark*. They knew the *Dane*, if he was once master of the passage of the *Sound*, would be tempted to impose hard laws on the trading nations, should he ever be strong enough to do it with impunity. And this reason has long engaged the *English* and *Dutch*, as much as possible, to hold the balance even between the Princes of the north. They joined themselves to the young King of *Sweden*, who seemed ready to be crushed by so many enemies, united together against him, and succoured him for the same reason the others fell upon him, because they thought him incapable of defending himself. In the mean time *Charles* set out for his first campaign on the 8th of *May* new style in the year 1700. He left *Stockholm*, and never after returned thither. An immense body of people attended him as far as *Carlskrona*, offering up their prayers for him, and bursting into tears of admiration. Before he left *Sweden*, he established at *Stockholm* a council of defense, made up of several Senators. Their commission was to take care of all that regarded the fleet, the troops, and fortifications of the country. The body of the senate was to regulate every thing besides provisionally within the kingdom. Having thus settled order and regularity in his dominions, his mind, now free from every other care, was bent wholly upon the war. His fleet consisted of three and forty vessels; that which carried him, named the *King Charles*, and the biggest they had ever seen, was a ship of an hundred and twenty guns; Count *Piper* his first Minister, General *Renschild*, and the Count de *Guiscard*.



card, Ambassador of *France* in *Sweden*, embarked with him. He joined the squadrons of the allies. The *Danish* fleet declined the engagement, and gave the three united fleets the opportunity of drawing so near *Copenhagen*, as to throw some bombs into the town.

The King then, as in a sudden transport, taking Count *Piper* and General *Renchild* by the hands, "And what, says he, if we should lay hold of the opportunity of making a descent, and besiege *Copenhagen* by land, whilst it is blocked up by sea!" *Renchild* answered, "Sir, the great *Gustavus* after fifteen years experience would not have made any other proposition." Orders were immediately given for five thousand men to embark, who lay upon the coast of *Sweden*, and were joined to the troops they had on board. The King quitted his great vessel, and entered into a lighter frigate; and then they dispatched three hundred granadiers in small shallops towards the shore. Among these shallops were small flat-bottomed boats, which carried the *Fascines*, the *Chevaux de Frize*, and the instruments of the pioneers. Five hundred select men followed after in other shallops. Then came the King's men of war, with two *English* frigates and two *Dutch*, which were to favour the descent with their cannon.

*Copenhagen*, the capital of *Denmark*, is situate in the isle of *Zealand*, in the midst of a beautiful plain, which has the *Sound* on the north-west, and the *Baltick* on the east, where the King of *Sweden* then lay. Upon the unexpected movement of the vessels, which threatened a descent, the inhabitants in a consternation at the inactivity of



of their own fleet, and the motion of the *Swedish* ships, looked round with terror to see in what place the storm would fall. The fleet of *Charles* stood up against *Humblebeck* within seven miles of *Copenhagen*. Immediately the *Danes* drew up their horse to that place. The foot were posted behind thick entrenchments, and what artillery they could get thither was directed against the *Swedes*.

The King then quitted his frigate, to throw himself into the first shallop, at the head of his guards. The Ambassador of *France* was constantly at his side; "Sir, says the King to him in *Latin*, (for he would never speak *French*) you have no difference with the *Danes*, you shall go no farther if you please." "Sir," answered the Count *de Guiscard* in *French*, "the King my master has ordered me to attend your Majesty; I flatter myself you will not this day drive me from your court, which never before appeared so splendid." As he spoke these words, he gave his hands to the King, who leapt into the shallop, whither Count *Piper* and the Ambassador followed him. They advanced under cover of the cannon of the vessels, which favoured the descent. The small boats were but about a hundred yards off the shore; *Charles*, impatient to land, threw himself from the shallop into the sea, with his sword in his hand, and the water above his middle. His Ministers, the Ambassador of *France*, the officers and soldiers immediately followed his example, and marched to shore, amidst a shower of musket-shot, which the *Danes* discharged. The King, who had never in his life before heard a discharge of muskets loaded with



with ball, asked major *Stuart*, who stood near him, "What whistling that was which he had in his ears?" "'Tis the noise of the market-bell which they fire upon you," says the major. "That's right, says the King, henceforward it shall be my musick." And that moment the major, who explained the noise to him, received a shot in his shoulder; and a lieutenant on the other side of him fell dead at his feet. It is usual for troops that are attacked in their entrenchments to be beaten, because the assailants have generally an impetuosity, which the defenders cannot have; besides, to wait for the enemy in one's lines, is generally a confession of one's own weakness, and the other's advantage. The *Danish* horse and foot took to their heels after a faint resistance. As soon as the King was master of their entrenchments he fell upon his knees to thank God for the first success of his arms. He immediately caused redoubts to be raised towards the town, and himself marked out the encampment. At the same time he sent back his vessels to *Schenen*, a part of *Sweden* not far from *Copenhagen*, for fresh recruits of nine thousand men. Every thing conspired to assist the vivacity of *Charles*. The nine thousand men were upon the shore ready to embark, and the next morning a favourable wind brought them to him.

All this passed within sight of the *Danish* fleet, who durst not venture to interpose. *Copenhagen* in a fright sent deputies immediately to the King to entreat him not to bombard the town. He received them on horseback at the head of his regiment of guards, and the deputies fell upon their knees before him. He demanded of the town

four



four hundred thousand rix-dollars, with orders to supply his camp with all sorts of provisions, which he promised they should be honestly paid for. They brought him the provisions, because they durst not refuse them, but were in no expectation that the conquerors would vouchsafe to pay for them; and those who brought them were astonished to find that they were paid generously and without delay by the meanest soldiers in the army. There had long reigned in the *Swedish* troops a strict discipline, which contributed not a little to their conquest; and the young King made it still more severe. There was not a soldier who dared to refuse payment for whatever he bought, much less go a maroding, or even stir out of the camp. He would not so much as allow his troops after victory the privilege of stripping the dead, till they had his permission, and easily brought them to the observance of this order. Prayers were constantly said in his camp twice a day, at seven in the morning, and four in the afternoon; and he never failed to be present at them himself, to give his soldiers an example of piety, as well as valour. His camp, which was far better regulated than *Copenhagen*, had every thing in abundance; and the country people chose rather to sell their provisions to their enemies the *Swedes*, than to their own countrymen, who did not pay so well for them. And the citizens were more than once obliged to fetch those provisions from the King of *Sweden's* camp, which they wanted in their markets.

The King of *Denmark* was then in *Holstein*, whither he seemed to have marched only to raise the siege of *Toningen*. He saw the *Baltick* covered with



with his enemy's ships, a young conqueror already master of *Zealand*, and ready to take possession of the capital. He published a declaration, that whoever would take up arms against the *Swedes* should have their liberty. This declaration was of great weight in a country, where all the peasants, and even many of the townsmen were slaves. *Charles XII.* was in no fear of an army of slaves. He let the King of *Denmark* know, that he made war for no other reason but to oblige him to make peace; and that he must either resolve to do justice to the Duke of *Holstein*, or see *Copenhagen* destroyed, and his kingdom put to fire and sword. The *Dane* was too fortunate to have to do with a conqueror, who valued himself upon his justice. A congress was appointed to meet in the town of *Travendal*, on the frontiers of *Holstein*. The King of *Sweden* would not suffer the artifice of the ministers to protract the negotiations into any length; he would have the treaty finished with as much rapidity as he made his descent into *Zealand*. And it was effectually concluded on the 5th of *August*, to the advantage of the Duke of *Holstein*, who was indemnified from all the expences of the war, and delivered from oppression. The King of *Sweden* would accept of nothing for himself, being satisfied with having relieved his ally, and humbled his enemy. Thus *Charles XII.* at eighteen years of age began and ended this war in less than six weeks.

Precisely at the same time the King of *Poland* laid siege in person to the town of *Riga*, the capital of *Livonia*; and the Czar was upon his march on the east at the head of an hundred thousand men. *Riga* was defended by the old Count d'Albion, a *Swedish* General, who at the age of four



more joined all the re of youth to the experience of sixty campaigns. Count *Flemming*, since Minister of *Poland*, a great man both in the field and at the council-board, and Mr. *Patkul*, carried on the siege under the King's direction; the one with all the activity proper to his character, and the other with the utmost obstinacy of revenge. But notwithstanding several advantages which the besiegers had gained, the experience of the old Count *Alberg* render'd all their efforts fruitless, and the King of *Poland* despaired of gaining the town. He at last laid hold of an honourable opportunity of raising the siege. *Riga* was full of merchants' goods, belonging to the *Dutch*. The States General ordered their Ambassador attending upon King *Augustus*, to make proper representations of it to him. The King of *Poland* did not stand in need of much intreaty. He consented to raise the siege, rather than occasion the least damage to his allies: Who were not mightily surprized at this excess of complaisance, as they knew the real cause of it.

No more then remained for *Charles XII.* to do for finishing his first campaign, than to march against his rival in glory, *Peter Alexiowitz*. He was the more enraged against him, as there were still three *Moscovite* Ambassadors at *Stockholm*, who had lately sworn to renew an inviolable peace. He, who valued himself upon a severe probity, could not comprehend how a legislator like the Czar could make a jest of what ought to be held so sacred. The young Prince full of honour did not so much as dream, that there could be a different morality for Princes and private persons. The Emperor of *Moscow* published



published a manifesto, which he had much better have suppressed. He alledged for a reason of the war, that they had not paid him sufficient honour when he passed *incognito* to *Riga*: and that the sold provisions too dear to his Ambassadors. These were the injuries, for which he ravaged *Ingria* with a hundred thousand men.

He appeared before *Narva* at the head of the great army on the first of *October*, in a season more severe in that climate than the month of *January* is at *Paris*. The Czar, who in such weather would sometimes ride post four hundred leagues to see a mine or a canal, spared his troops no more than he spared himself. Besides, he knew that the *Swedes* ever since the time of *Gustavus Adolphus* would make war in the depth of winter as well as in summer, and he wanted to accustom the *Moscovites* also to lose all distinction of seasons, and to make them one day at least equal to the *Swedes*. Thus at a time when the frosts and snows oblige other nations in temperate climates to a suspension of arms, the Czar *Peter* laid siege to *Narva* within thirty degrees of the pole, and *Charles XII.* was upon his march to relieve it.

The Czar was no sooner arrived before the place, than he made haste to put in practice what he had lately learnt abroad in his travels. He marked out his camp, fortified it on all sides, raised redoubts at certain distances, and opened the trench himself. He had given the command of his army to the *Duke de Croy* a *German*, and an able General, but at that time very little assisted by the *Moscovite* Officers. For himself, he had only the rank of a private lieutenant in his own troops. He judged it necessary



necessary to give his nobility an example of military obedience, who till then had been undisciplined, and accustomed to march at the head of ill-trained slaves without any experience or order. He had a mind to teach them, that places in the army were to be obtained by services; he began himself with beating a drum, and was raised to an officer's degrees. 'Tis by no means to be wondered at, that he, who at *Amsterdam* turned carpenter to procure himself fleets, should become a lieutenant at *Narva* to teach his nation the art of war.

The *Moscovites* are strong and indefatigable, and, it may be, as courageous as the *Swedes*; but requires time to form experienced troops, and discipline to make them invincible. The only good soldiers in the army were thirty thousand *Streletses*, who were in *Moscow* what the *Janisaries* are in *Turkey*. The rest were *Barbarians* forced from their forests, and covered over with the skins of wild beasts, some armed with arrows, and others with clubs; few of them had fuses, nor had any one of them seen a regular siege; there was not one good canoneer in the whole army. An hundred and fifty canon, which one would have thought must have soon laid the little town of *Narva* in ashes, were scarce able to make a breach, where the artillery of the town destroyed every moment whole ranks in the trenches. *Narva* was almost without fortifications, and Count *Hoorn*, who commanded there, had not a thousand regular troops; and yet this immense army was not able to reduce it in ten weeks.

On the 15th of *November* the Czar had information that the King of *Sweden* having crossed the sea with two hundred transports, was upon his march



march to relieve *Narva*. The *Swedes* were more than twenty thousand, but the Czar had no advantage except superiority of number. Farther therefore from despising his enemy, he employed all the art he had to crush him; and not content with an hundred thousand men, he was getting ready another army to oppose him, and checked his progress. He had already given orders for near forty thousand recruits, who were coming up from *Plescow* with great expedition. He went in person to hasten their march, that he might hem in the King between the two armies. Nor was this all; a detachment of thirty thousand men from the camp before *Narva* were posted at a league's distance from the town, directly in the King of *Sweden's* road: Twenty thousand *Streletses* were placed farther off upon the same road, and five thousand others made up an advanced guard; and he must necessarily force his way through the body of all these troops before he could reach the camp which was fortified with a rampart and double *Fosse*. The King of *Sweden* had landed at *Pernaw* in the gulph of *Riga*, with about sixteen thousand foot and a few more than four thousand horse.

From *Pernaw* he made a flying march as far as *Revel*, followed by all his horse, and only four thousand of his foot. But he always marched before, without waiting for the rest of his troops; and soon found himself with his eight thousand men only, before the first posts of the enemy. He without hesitation attacked them one after another, without giving them time to learn with how small a number they had to engage. The *Moscovites* seeing the *Swedes* come upon them, made no doubt but they had a whole army to encounter.



counter ; and the advanced guard of five thousand men immediately fled upon their approach. The twenty thousand beyond them terrified with the flight of their countrymen, made no resistance ; and carried their consternation and confusion among the thirty thousand, who were posted within a league of the camp ; and the panick seizing upon them too, they retired to the main body of the army without striking a blow. These three posts were carried in two days and an half ; and what upon other occasions would have been reckoned three victories did not retard the King's march the space of one hour. He appeared then at last with his eight thousand men, wearied with the fatigues of so long a march, before a camp of an hundred thousand *Moscovites*, with an hundred and fifty pieces of brass cannon in their front : And he scarce allow'd them any time for rest, before he gave his orders for the attack without delay.

The signal was two fuses, and the word in German, *With the aid of God*. A general Officer having represented to him the great hazard of the attempt, " What, says he, do you make any question whether I with my eight thousand brave Swedes shall not rout a hundred thousand *Moscovites* ?" But upon recollection, fearing there was too much ostentation in what he said, he ran after the officer in a moment, " And are not you, says he, of the same opinion ? Have not I a double advantage over the enemy ; the one, that their horse can be of no service to them ; and the other, that the place being strait, their great number will only incommode them, and thus in reality I shall be stronger than they ?"

The Officer did not think fit to differ from him,

C

and



and thus they marched against the *Moscovites* about noon on the 30th of *November* 1700.

As soon as the cannon of the *Swedes* had made a breach in the entrenchments, they advanced with their bayonets at the end of their fuses, at the same time a violent storm of snow, which fell at their backs, was driven by the wind full in the face of the enemy. The *Moscovites* stood their fire for half an hour, without quitting their posts. The King attack'd the Czar's quarter, which lay on the other side of the camp, and was in hopes of a rencounter, as not knowing that the Emperor was gone in quest of the forty thousand men, who were daily expected. Upon the first discharge of the enemies shot, the King received a ball in his left shoulder, but it grazed only in a slight manner upon the flesh; his activity even hindered him from perceiving that he was wounded. Presently after his horse was killed under him. A second had his head carried off by a cannon-ball. And as he was nimbly mounting a third. "These fellows, says he, make me exercise," and then he went on to engage and give orders with the same presence of mind as before. Within three hours the entrenchments were carried on all sides. The King pursued the right of the enemy as far as the river of *Narva*, with his left wing, if one might properly call by that name about four thousand men, who were in pursuit of near fifty thousand. The bridge broke under them as they fled, and the river was in a moment covered with the dead. The rest in despair returned to their camp, without knowing whither they went; and finding certain barracks, they took their posts behind them. There they defended themselves for a while, as not knowing how



how to make their escape. But at last their generals *Dolborouky*, *Gollouin*, and *Fedorowitz* surrendered themselves to the King, and laid their arms at his Majesty's feet. And in the instant they were offering them came up the Duke of *Croy* the General of the army, to surrender himself with thirty officers.

*Charles* received all these prisoners of distinction with as easy a politeness, and as obliging an air, as if he had been to pay them the honours of an entertainment in his own court. He only detained the general officers, all the subalterns and common soldiers were disarmed and conducted to the river of *Narva*, where they were furnished with boats to carry them over, and return them back to their own homes. In the mean time night came on, and the left wing of the *Moscovites* still continued fighting. The *Swedes* had not lost fifteen hundred men; eighteen thousand *Moscovites* had been killed in their intrenchments; a great number was drowned; many had passed the river; but still there remained enough in the camp to exterminate the *Swedes* even to the last man. But it is not the number of the dead, but the terror of those who survive, that gives the finishing stroke to victories. The King employed the small remains of the day in seizing upon the enemy's artillery. He posted himself to advantage between their camp and the town, and there slept some hours on the ground, wrapt up in his cloak, expecting to fall at day-break upon the left wing of the enemy, which was not yet entirely routed. But at two o'clock in the morning General *Wade*, who commanded that wing, having heard of the gracious reception the King had



had given to the other Generals, and how he had sent home all the subaltern officers and soldiers, desired that he would grant him the same favour. The conqueror made answer, that he should have it if he would draw near at the head of his troops, and lay down his arms and colours at his feet. The General appeared soon after with his *Moscovites*, to the number of about thirty thousand. They marched soldiers and officers, with their heads uncovered, across less than seven thousand *Swedes*. The soldiers, as they passed before him, threw down their fuses and swords upon the ground, and the officers presented him with their ensigns and colours. He caused the whole multitude to cross the river, without retaining a single soldier prisoner. If he had put them under guard, the number of the prisoners would at least have been five times greater than that of the conquerors.

He then entered victorious into *Narva*, attended by the Duke of *Croy* and the other general officers of the *Moscovites*. He ordered their swords to be restored to them, and being informed that they wanted money, and that the tradesmen of *Narva* refused to trust them, he sent the Duke of *Croy* a thousand ducats, and every *Moscovite* officer five hundred, who could never sufficiently admire the civility of their treatment, of which they could not form to themselves the least idea. Immediately a relation of the victory was drawn up at *Narva* to be sent to *Stockholm* and the allies of *Sweden*, but the King cut off with his own hand whatever was reported too much to his own advantage, or to the detriment of the Czar. His modesty could not hinder their striking at *Stockholm*



*Stockholm* several medals to perpetuate the memory of these events. Among the rest they struck one, which represented him on the one side standing on a pedestal, to which were chained a *Moscovite*, a *Dane*, and a *Polander*; and on the reverse an *Hercules* armed with his club, treading upon a *Cerberus*, with this inscription, TRES UNO CON-  
TUDIT ICTU.

Among the prisoners taken at the battle of *Narva* there was one, who was a great instance of the revolutions of fortune. He was the eldest son and heir to the King of *Georgia*. They called him the *Czarafis*, a name which signifies Prince, or son of *Czar* amongst all the *Tartars*, as well as in *Moscow*. For the word *Czar* signified King among the ancient *Scythians*, from whom all these people are descended, and is by no means derived from the *Cæsars* of *Rome*, so long unknown to these *Barbarians*. His father *Mitelleski Czar*, who was master of the most beautiful part of the country situate between the mountains of *Ararat* and the eastern coasts of the *Black Sea*, had been driven from his kingdom by his own subjects in 1688, and chose rather to throw himself into the arms of the Emperor of *Moscow*, than apply to the *Turks*. This King's son, at nineteen years of age, attended upon *Peter* the Great in his expedition against the *Swedes*, and was taken fighting by some *Finland* soldiers, who had already stripped him, and were upon the point of killing him. Count *Renchild* rescued him from their hands, supplied him with clothes, and presented him to his master. *Charles* sent him to *Stockholm*, where the unfortunate Prince died some few years after. Upon his taking leave, the King could not



avoid making aloud in the hearing of his officers a natural reflection upon the strange fate of an *Asiatick* Prince born at the foot of mount *Caucasus*, who was going to live a prisoner among the snows of *Sweden*. "It is, says he, as if I was to be "one day a prisoner among the *Crim Tartars*." These words at that time made no impression, but were afterwards but too much thought on, when the event had confirmed the prediction.

The Czar was advancing by long marches with an army of forty thousand *Russians*, in expectation of surrounding his enemy on all sides. In the mid-way he had intelligence of the battle of *Narva*, and the dispersion of his whole camp. He judged it not convenient with his forty thousand raw and undisciplined men, to engage with a conqueror, who had lately destroyed an hundred thousand intrenched in their camp. He returned back from whence he came, still pursuing his resolution of disciplining his troops, at the same time that he civilized his subjects. "I know," says he, "the *Swedes* will beat us for some time, but "in time they will teach us to beat them." *Moscow*, his capital, was in the utmost terror and desolation, at the news of this defeat. And so great was the pride and ignorance of the people, that they could not be persuaded but they had been conquered by more than human power, and that the *Swedes* had been victorious by the force of magic. This opinion was so general, that public prayers were ordered to be put up to St. *Nicholas*, the patron of *Moscow*, upon the occasion. The form was too singular to be here omitted. It runs thus.

"O thou, who art our perpetual comforter in  
" all



all our adversities, great *St. Nicholas*, infinitely powerful, by what sin have we offended thee in our sacrifices, genuflexions, bowings and thanksgivings, that thou hast thus forsaken us? We have implored thy assistance against these terrible, insolent, enraged, dreadful, insuperable destroyers, when like lions and bears, who have lost their young, they have fallen upon us, terrified, wounded, and slain by thousands, us who are thy people. As it is impossible this should have happened without diabolical influence and enchantment, we beseech thee, O great *St. Nicholas*, to be our champion and standard-bearer, to deliver us from this troop of forcerers, and drive them far off from our coasts, with the recompence that is due unto them."

Whilst the *Moscovites* were thus complaining of their defeat to *St. Nicholas*, *Charles XII.* returned thanks to God, and prepared himself for new victories.

*The End of the First Book.*



THE  
HISTORY  
OF  
CHARLES XII.  
KING of SEW DEN.

BOOK II.

The CONTENTS.

Charles beats the Saxons at the passage of the Duna; conquers Courland; is master in Lithuania; resolves to dethrone Augustus. A short account of the Polish government. A Diete is called at Warsaw; one half of the nation declares against King Augustus. The Embassy of the Republick of Poland to Charles; the King of Poland sends privately to him the Countess of Koningsmarck; the battle of Crassau; the Duke of Holstein is slain; the Cardinal Primate declares the throne of King Augustus vacant. Augustus seizes upon James Sobieski, who was intended to be elected in his stead, and shuts him up in prison at Leipfick, with Prince Constantine his brother.



THE King of *Poland* with reason expected, that his enemy, already victorious over the *Danes* and the *Moscovites*, would come next to vent his fury on him. He entered into a league more strict than ever with the Czar, and the two Princes agreed upon an interview, the better to contrive their measures. They met at *Birsen*, a small town in *Lithuania*, without any of those formalities, which serve only to retard business, and were neither agreeable to their situation nor their humour. They passed fifteen days together in the enjoyment of several extravagant pleasures; for the Czar, amidst his cares for the reformation of his Kingdom, could never correct in himself his dangerous inclination to debauchery.

Count *Piper*, the King of *Sweden*'s principal minister, had the first information of the interview intended between the Emperor of *Moscow* and the King of *Poland*. He advised his master to oppose to their measures a little of that policy, which he had hitherto too much disregarded. *Charles XII.* listened to him, and for the first time gave consent to the practice of political intrigues so frequent in other courts. There was in the *Swedish* troops a young *Scotch* gentleman, who was one of those who seasonably leave their country, where they are very poor, and are to be met with in all the armies of *Europe*. He spoke the *German* tongue extremely well, and could easily accommodate himself to every conjuncture. Him therefore they chose to be a spy upon the conferences of the two Kings. He applied himself to the Colonel of the regiment of *Saxon* horse,



who were to serve as guards to the Czar during the interview. He passed for a gentleman of *Brandenburg*, and his address and a proper distribution of money easily procured him a lieutenancy in the regiment. When he came to *Birsen* he artfully insinuated himself into the familiarity of the secretaries of the ministers, and was made a party in all their pleasures; and whether it was that he took the advantage of their indiscretion in a debauch of wine, or that he gained them by presents, he certainly drew from them all the secrets of their masters, and gave immediate notice of them to *Charles XII.*

The King of *Poland* had engaged to furnish the Czar with fifty thousand *German* troops, to be hired of several Princes, and which the Czar was to pay for. And he on the other hand was to send fifty thousand *Moscovites* into *Poland*, to be trained up to war, and promised to pay King *Augustus* three millions of \* rixdollars within the space of two years. This treaty, if it had been executed, might have proved fatal to the King of *Sweden*. 'Twas a ready and certain way to make the *Moscovites* good soldiers; and perhaps it was forging chains for one part of *Europe*.

*Charles XII.* used his utmost endeavours to prevent the King of *Poland* from reaping the benefit of this treaty. After he had passed the winter at *Narva*, he appeared in *Livonia* near that very town of *Riga*, which King *Augustus* had so unsuccessfully besieged. The *Saxon* troops were posted along the river *Duna*, which is very broad in that place, and *Charles*, who lay on the other side of the river,

\* A rixdollar is worth about as much as a *French* crown or three livres.



was to dispute the passage. The Saxons were not commanded by their Prince, who was then sick, but were headed by Mareschal *Stenau* and prince *Ferdinand* Duke of *Courland* who commanded under him. The King of *Sweden* had alone form'd the plan of the passage, he was about to attempt. He caused great Boats to be made after a new manner, whose sides were far higher than ordinary and could be raised or let down, like a draw-bridge. When raised they covered the troops they carried; and when let down, they served as a bridge to land them. He made use likewise of another stratagem. Having observed that the wind blew directly from the north; where he lay to the south, where his enemies were encamped, he set fire to a large heap of wet straw, which diffusing a thick smoke over the river, hindred the Saxons from seeing his troops, or judging what he was about to do. By means of this cloud he sent out barks laden with more of the same smoking straw, so that the cloud increasng, and being driven by the wind directly in the face of his enemies, it made it impossible for them to know whether he was upon his passage or not. He alone conducted the execution of his scheme, and being got into the midst of the river, "Well, says he to General *Renchild*, the *Duna* will be as good to us as the sea of *Copenhagen*; take my word for it, General, we shall beat them." He got to the other side in a quarter of an hour, and was vext to find that three people had leapt ashore before him. He immediately landed his cannon, and drew up his troops before the enemy, who were quite blinded with smoke, and could not make any opposition but by a few random-shot. And the wind having dispersed



dispersed the mist, the *Saxons* saw the King of *Sweden* already upon his march against them.

Mareschal *Stenau* lost not a moment, but at the first appearance of the *Swedes* fell furiously upon them with the flower of his horse. The violent shock of that troop falling upon the *Swedes* in the instant they were forming their battalions, threw them into disorder. They gave way, were broken, and pursued even into the river. The King of *Sweden* rallied them in a moment in the midst of the water, with as much ease, as if he had been making a review. The soldiers then, marching more compact than before, beat back Mareschal *Stenau* and advanced into the plain. *Stenau* finding his troops in a consternation, made them retire very dexterously into a dry place, flanked with a morass, and a wood where his artillery lay. The advantage of the ground, and the time he had given the *Saxons* to recover from their first surprize, restored them to their courage. *Charles* immediately fell upon them, having with him fifteen thousand men, and *Stenau* and the Duke of *Courland* about twelve thousand. The battle was sharp and bloody; the Duke had two horses killed under him, and thrice penetrated into the midst of the King's guard; but being at last beat off his horse with a blow from a musquet, his army fell into confusion, and disputed the victory no longer. His cuirassiers carried him off with difficulty, greatly bruised and half dead, from the thickest of the fight, and from under the horses heels, which trampled on him.

The King of *Sweden*, after this victory, marched immediately to *Mittau*, the capital of *Courland*, and took it. All the towns of the Dutchy surrendered



rendered to him at discretion ; it was rather a journey than a conquest. He passed without delay into *Lithuania*, and conquered where-ever he came. And he found a pleasing satisfaction, as he owned himself, when he entred the town of *Birsen* in triumph, where the King of *Poland* and the Czar had plotted his destruction but a few months before.

It was in this place that he laid the design of dethroning the King of *Poland* by the hands of the *Poles* themselves. As he was one day at table, wholly taken up with the thoughts of this enterprise, and observing his usual sobriety, in a profound silence, appearing, as it were, buried in the greatness of his conceptions; a *German* Colonel, who waited upon him, said loud enough to be heard, that the meals which the Czar and the King of *Poland* had made in the same place were something different from those of his Majesty. "Yes," says the King rising, "and I shall the more easily spoil their digestion." In short, intermixing at that time a little policy with the force of his arms, he made no delay to prepare for the event he was meditating to accomplish.

*Poland* is the most exact image of the old *Gothic* government, which has been corrected or altered every where else. 'Tis the sole state which has preserved the name of Republick in conjunction with the Royal Dignity. The Nobility and Clergy maintain their liberty against the King, and take it from the rest of the Nation. The body of the people are slaves; such is the fate of mankind, that the greatest number, in one sort or other, is always enslaved by the smaller. There the peasant sows not for himself, but for his Lord, to whom he and his land, as well as his manual labours belong,



long, and who can sell him or cut his throat with the same impunity as he can kill the beasts of the field. Every gentleman is independent. Judgment cannot be given against him in a criminal cause, unless by an assembly of the whole nation; nor can his person be seized, till after he is condemned: And thus he is seldom or never punished. Abundance of them are poor, and in this case they let themselves out to the more wealthy, receive a salary from them, and discharge the meanest offices, chusing rather to serve their equals, than enrich themselves by trade. The slavery of the generality of the nation, and the pride and idleness of the rest, deprive the country of all the improvements of art, though 'tis otherwise fertile, and watered with the finest rivers in *Europe*; insomuch that it would be very easy to open a communication by canals between the northern ocean and the *Black Sea*, and to take in the commerce of *Europe* and *Asia*. The few artificers and tradesmen who are to be met with in *Poland* are foreigners, *Scots*, *French* and *Jews*, who buy the provisions of the country at a cheap rate, and sell them dear to the nobility for the indulgence of their luxury.

Whoever should see a King of *Poland* in the pomp of royal Majesty, would be apt to think him the most absolute Prince in *Europe*, and yet he is certainly the least so. The *Poles* make really with him the same contract, which in other nations is supposed to subsist between the King and his subjects. The King of *Poland*, even at his consecration and in swearing to observe the *Pacta conventa*, discharges his subjects from their oath of allegiance, in case he should break the laws of the Republick.

He



He nominates to all places of trust, and confers all honours. Nothing is hereditary in *Poland* but estates in land, and nobility. The sons of a Palatin, or of a King, have no claim to the dignity of their father. But there is this great difference between the King and the Republick, that he can take away no office of power after having conferred it; and the Republick has a right to deprive him of the Crown, if he should transgress the laws of the State.

The nobility jealous of their liberty often sell their votes, and seldom their affections. They scarce have elected a King, before they fear his ambition, and cabal against him. The great men he has raised, and whom he cannot pull down, very often become his enemies, instead of remaining his creatures; and those who are attached to the court are hated by the rest of the nobility. This constantly forms two parties among them; a division inevitable, and even necessary, in countries where they will have Kings, and at the same time preserve their liberty.

What concerns the nation is regulated in the States General, which they call Dietes. These estates are made up of the body of the Senate and several gentlemen. The Senators are the Palatines and the Bishops; the second order is composed of the deputies of the particular Dietes in each Palatinate. The president in these great assemblies is the Archbishop of *Gnesna*, Primate of *Poland*, Vice-roy of the Kingdom in the *Inter-regnum*, and the first person of the State after the King. There is seldom in *Poland* any other Cardinal but himself; because the *Roman* purple giving no precedence in the Senate, a Bishop who should



should be made a Cardinal, would be obliged either to sit in his rank of Senator, or to renounce the solid rights of the dignity he has in his country, to support the pretensions of a foreign honour.

These Dietes by the laws of the Kingdom are to be held alternately in *Poland* and *Lithuania*. The deputies often decide their affairs there with their sabres in their hands, like the old *Sarmatæ*, from whom they are descended, and sometimes too disguised with drunkenness, a vice unknown to the *Sarmatæ*. Every gentleman deputed to the States General enjoys the right the Tribunes of the people had at *Rome*, of opposing themselves to the laws of the Senate. One single gentleman, who says, *I protest*, by that sole word puts a stop to the unanimous resolutions of all the rest: and if he quits the place where the Diete is held, they are obliged to break up.

For the disorders arising from this law they provide a remedy still more dangerous. *Poland* is seldom without two factions. Unanimity in the Diete being therefore impossible, each party forms confederacies, in which they decide by plurality of voices, without any regard to the protestations of the lesser number. These assemblies, uncountenanced by law, but authorized by custom, are made in the King's name, though often against his consent and interest; almost in the same manner as the league in *France* made use of *Henry* the third's name to ruin him; and as the Parliament in *England*, who brought *Charles* the first to the scaffold, began by setting his Majesty's name at the head of all the resolutions they took to destroy him. When the troubles are ended, it then belongs to the General Diete to confirm or dis-

annul



annul the acts of these confederacies. One Diete can also disannul whatever has been done by another, that has gone before it, for the same reason that in absolute Monarchies a King can abolish the laws of his predecessors, or even those he formerly made himself.

The Nobility, who make the laws of the Republick, likewise constitute its strength. They appear in arms upon great occasions, and can form a body of more than an hundred and fifty thousand men. This great army, called *Pospolite*, moves with difficulty, and is ill govern'd; the scarcity of provisions and forage makes it impossible for them to subsist long together; they want discipline, subordination and experience; but the love of liberty, which animates them, makes them always formidable.

They may be conquered, or dispersed, or even held for a time in bondage, but they soon shake off the yoke; they compare themselves to reeds, which a storm will bend to the ground, and which will rise again as soon as it is calm. 'Tis for this reason they have no places of strength; they will be themselves the only bulwarks of the Republick they never suffer their King to build any fort, lest he should employ it less for their defence, than oppression. Their country is entirely open, except two or three frontier places. And if in any of their wars, either among themselves or with foreigners, they resolve to sustain a siege, they are obliged to raise fortifications of earth in haste, to repair the old walls that are half ruined, and to enlarge the *Fossés* that are half filled up, and the town is taken before the entrenchments are finish'd.

The *Pospolite* is not always on horseback to guard



guard the country, they mount only by order of the Dietes, or sometimes by the single order of the King in extremity of danger.

The usual guard of *Poland* is an army which ought always to subsist at the expence of the Republick. It is made up of two bodies independent of each other; under two different Grand Generals. The first body is that of *Poland*, and should consist of six and thirty thousand men; the second to the number of twelve thousand is that of *Lithuania*. The two Grand Generals are independent of each other; and though they be nominated by the King they never give an account of their actions to any but the Republick, and have a supreme authority over their troops. The colonels are absolute masters of their regiments, and it belongs to them to procure them sustenance as they can, and pay them. But as they are seldom paid themselves, they lay waste the country; and ruin the husbandmen to satisfy their own avidity, and that of their soldiers. The *Polish* Lords appear in these armies with more magnificence than in their towns, and their tents are better furnished than their houses. The horse which makes up two thirds of the army is almost all composed of gentlemen, and is remarkable for the gracefulness of the riders, the beauty of the horses, and the richness of the accoutrements and harness.

Their *Gens d'Armes* especially, which they distinguish into *Houffarts* and *Pancernes*, march always attended by several valets, who lead their horses, whose bridles are ornamented with plates of silver and nails of the same metal, embroidered saddles, saddle-bows and stirrups gilt, and sometimes made of massy silver, with large housings trailing



ailing after the *Turkish* manner, whose magnificence the *Poles* strive to imitate as much as they can.

But how gorgeous soever the cavalry may appear, the foot \* are as wretched and ragged, ill-clothed and ill-armed, without proper furniture or any thing uniform, at least this was their condition till the year 1710. and yet these foot, who resemble the vagabond *Tartars*, support hunger and cold, fatigues and all the weight of war, with incredible resolution.

One may still observe in the *Polish* soldiers the character of the ancient *Sarmatæ* their ancestors, little discipline, the same fury in the assault, the same readiness to run away and return to the battle, and the same cruel disposition to slaughter, when they are conquerors.

The King of *Poland* at first flattered himself that in his necessity, these two armies would fight for him, that the *Polish* *Pospolite* would arm at his orders, and that all these forces joined to the *Saxons* his subjects and the *Moscovites* his allies, would make up a body, before which the small number of the *Swedes* would not venture to appear. But he saw himself almost on a sudden deprived of these succours by the very care that he had taken to have them all together.

Accustomed in his hereditary dominions to absolute power, he too readily supposed he could govern in *Poland* as in *Saxony*. The beginning of his reign raised malecontents; his first proceed-

\* *Monf. Voltaire* is mistaken in this particular, for the *Polish* foot have been always well armed and clothed since *Augustus* came to the Crown. They might have been in former reigns, as our Historian now represents them; but they certainly did not resemble the *Tartars* when the war first began between *Augustus* and *Charles XII.*



ings provoked the party who had opposed his election, and almost alienated all the rest. The *Poles* murmured to see their towns filled with *Saxon* garrisons and their frontiers with *Moscovite* troops. This nation, far more jealous of maintaining their own liberty than solicitous to disturb their neighbours, did not look upon King *Augustus's* war with *Sweden*, and the invasion of *Lithuania*, as an enterprize advantageous to the Republick. 'Tis not an easy matter to hinder a free nation from discerning their true interests. The *Poles* were of opinion that if this war, undertaken without their consent, should prove unsuccessful, their country, lying open on all sides, would become a prey to the King of *Sweden*; and if it should succeed, they should be subdued by their own King who, being then master of *Lithuania* as well as *Saxony*, would enslave *Poland*, as it lyes between those two countries, which are filled with fortified places. In this alternative, either of becoming slaves to the King whom they had elected, or of being ravaged by *Charles XII.* who was justly incensed, they only raised a clamour against the war, which they judged to be rather declared against themselves, than against *Sweden*; and they looked upon the *Saxons* and *Moscovites* as the instruments of their chains. Upon the King of *Sweden's* defeating all that had opposed his passage, and advancing with a victorious army into the heart of *Lithuania*, they loudly exclaimed against their Sovereign, and with the more freedom, because he was unfortunate.

*Lithuania* was then divided into two parties, that of the Princes of *Sapieha*, and that of *Oginsky*. These two factions had begun from private quarrels, and degenerated into a civil war. The King



Sweden drew over to his interest the Princes *Opieha*; and *Oginsky*, being but badly assisted by the Saxons, found his party almost extinguished. The Lithuanian army whom these troubles and want of money had reduced to a small number, was in part dispersed by the conqueror. The few who held out for the King of *Poland* were separated into small bodies of wandring troops, which over-ran the country and subsisted by spoil. So that *Augustus* beheld nothing in *Lithuania*, but the weakness of his own party, the hatred of his subjects, and the army of the enemy conducted by a young Prince, incensed, victorious and implacable. There was indeed an army in *Poland*, but instead of six and thirty thousand men, the number prescribed by the laws, it hardly consisted of eighteen thousand. And it was not only ill paid and ill armed, but the Generals were undetermined what course they should take.

The King's best refuge was to order the nobility to follow him; but he durst not expose himself to a refusal, which would have too much discovered his weakness, and consequently increased it.

In this state of trouble and uncertainty all the Palatinates of the Kingdom demanded a Diete of the King; in like manner as in *England* in times of difficulty all the bodies of the State present addresses to the King to desire him to call a Parliament. *Augustus* stood more in need of an army than a Diete, where the actions of Kings are examined. He was obliged however to call one, that he might not exasperate the nation beyond a possibility of reconciliation. A Diete therefore was appointed to meet at *Warsaw* on the second of December 1701. And he soon perceived that

*Charles*



*Charles XII.* had at least as much power in the assembly as himself. Those who held for the *Sapieha*, the *Lubormirsky*, and their friends, the *Polak*, the *Lecfinsky* Treasurer of the Crown, and above all the partizans of the Princes *Sobieski*, were all secretly attached to the King of *Sweden*.

The most considerable of them, and the most dangerous enemy the King of *Poland* had, was Cardinal *Radjousky*, Archbishop of *Gnesna*, Primate of the kingdom, and President of the Diet. He was a man full of artifice and reserve in his conduct; entirely governed by an ambitious woman, whom the *Swedes* called *Madame la Cardinale*, who never ceased to push him on to intrigue and faction. The Primate's talent lay chiefly in making his advantage of the conjunctures which fell in his way, without endeavouring to give rise to them. He would appear unresolved when he was most absolutely determined in his projects, seeking always to gain his ends by ways which seemed most opposite to them. King *John Sobieski*, the predecessor of *Augustus*, had formerly made him Bishop of *Wamerlandt*, and Vice-chancellor of the kingdom. And *Radjousky*, whilst a private Bishop, obtained the Cardinal's hat by the favour of the same Prince. This dignity soon opened him the way to the primacy; and thus, uniting in his person whatever is apt to impose upon others, he was in a condition to attempt great things with impunity.

Upon the death of *John*, he used his utmost endeavours to place Prince *James Sobieski* upon the throne; but the universal hatred they bore to the father, as great a man as he was, set aside the son. The Cardinal Primate then joined with



*de Abbé de Polignac*, Ambassador of *France*, to give the crown to the Prince of *Conti*, who in reality was elected, but the money and troops of *Saxony* got the better of his eloquence. He at last offered himself to be drawn into the party, which crowned the Elector of *Saxony*, and waited with impatience for an opportunity to sow division between the Nation and the new King.

The victories of *Charles XII.* protector of Prince *James Sobieski*, the civil war of *Lithuania*, the general disaffections of all mens minds to King *Augustus*, gave the Cardinal hopes that the time was now come when he might be able to send back *Augustus* into *Saxony*, and open to the son of King *John* the way to the throne. This Prince, before the innocent object of the *Poles* aversion, was now become their darling from the time that King *Augustus* grew out of favour; but he durst not indulge himself in the thoughts of so great a revolution; and yet the Cardinal had insensibly laid the foundations of it.

He at first seemed desirous of reconciling the King with the Republick: He sent circular letters, dictated in appearance by the spirit of concord and charity, usual and noted snares, but such as never fail to trap: He wrote a pathetic letter to the King of *Sweden*, conjuring him in the name of him, whom all Christians equally adore, to give peace to *Poland* and her King. *Charles XII.* answered the Cardinal's intentions more than his words. In the mean time he remained in the great Duchy of *Lithuania* with his victorious army, declaring that he would not disturb the Diete; that he made war against *Augustus* and the *Saxons*, and not against *Poland*; and that far from designing any thing against



against the Republick, he came to rescue it from oppression. These letters and these answers were for the publick. The emissaries who went and came continually from the Cardinal to Count Piper and the private assemblies held at that prelate's house, were the springs that moved the Diet. They proposed to send an embassy to *Charles XI* and required with one consent of the King, that he should bring no more *Moscovites* upon their frontiers, and that he should send back the *Saxon* troops.

The bad fortune of *Augustus* had already done what the Diete demanded of him. The league secretly concluded with the *Moscovites* at *Birsen* was become as insignificant, as at first it had appeared formidable. He was far from being able to send the Czar the fifty thousand *Germans* he had promised to raise in the Empire. The Czar himself a dangerous enemy to *Poland*, was at that time very eager to assist with all his forces a divided Kingdom, from whence he was in hopes of reaping some spoils. He contented himself with sending twenty thousand *Moscovites* into *Lithuania*, who did more mischief there than the *Swedes* dying continually before the conqueror, and ravaging the lands of the *Poles*, 'till at last being pursued by the *Swedish* Generals, and finding nothing more to pillage, they returned in shoals to their own country. As for the scattered remains of the *Saxon* army beaten at *Riga*, King *Augustus* sent them to winter and recruit in *Saxony*, that this sacrifice, however involuntary, might soften the rage of the incensed *Poles*.

The war was then changed into intrigues, and the Diete divided into almost as many factions as there were Palatines. One day the interests of

King



King *Augustus* prevail'd, and the next they were proscrib'd. Every individual cried out for liberty and justice, but not one knew what it was to be at or free. The time was spent in caballing in secret, and haranguing in publick. The Diete either knew what they would, nor what they should, do. Great companies seldom agree upon proper counsels in times of civil broils, because the bold men in such assemblies are generally factious, and the men of probity timorous. The Diete broke up in disorder on the 17th of *February* 1702, after three months of caballing and irresolution. The Senators, who are the Palatines and the Bishops, remained at *Warsaw*. The Senate of *Poland* has a right to make laws provisionally, which the Dietes seldom disannul. This body being not so numerous and used to business, was far less tumultuous and came to a determination more quickly.

They agreed to send the embassy to the King of *Sweden* proposed in the Diete, that the *Pospolite* should mount their horses, and be ready upon all emergencies. They made several regulations to appease the troubles in *Lithuania*, and still more to diminish the King's authority, tho' they had less reason to be afraid of it, than that of *Charles*.

*Augustus* chose rather to receive hard laws from his conqueror than his subjects. He determined to ask peace of the King of *Sweden*, and would have concluded a private treaty with him. But he was obliged to conceal this step from the Senate, whom he look'd upon as an enemy still more untractable. As the affair was delicate, he entrusted it wholly to the Countess of *Koningsmarck*, a Swedish lady



lady of great birth, to whom he was then attached. This lady, who was so famous in the world for her wit and beauty, was more capable than any minister whatever to give success to a negotiation. Besides, as she had an estate in *Charles* the XIIth's dominions, and had lived long in his court, she had a plausible pretence for waiting upon him. She came then to the *Swedish* camp in *Lithuania*, and straight applied her self to Count *Piper*, who too inadvertently promised her an audience of his master. The Countess, among the perfections which rendered her one of the most amiable persons in *Europe*, had a singular talent of speaking the languages of several countries, which she had never seen, and with as much propriety as though she had been born in them. She would sometimes amuse herself with writing *French* Verses, which might easily have been mistaken for the composition of a person brought up at *Versailles*. She made some for *Charles* XII. which ought not to be forgotten in history. She introduced the fabulous Gods, commending his different virtues; and the piece concluded thus,

*Enfin chacun des Dieux discourant à sa gloire,  
Le plaçoit par avance au temple de mémoire :  
Mais Venus ni Bacchus n'en dirent pas un mot.*

*The Hero's acts while other Gods proclaim,  
And praise and promise him immortal fame;  
Silent sit Bacchus, and the Queen of love.*

All her wit and charms were lost upon such a man as the King of *Sweden*, and he constantly re-



refused to see her. But as he frequently rode out to take the air, she resolved to speak to him upon the road. And accordingly meeting him one day in a narrow road, she alighted out of her coach, as soon as she saw him. The King made her a low bow, without speaking one word to her, turned the bridle of his horse, and rode back in an instant. So that the Countess of *Koningsmarck* gained no other advantage from her journey, but the satisfaction of believing that the King of *Sweden* feared no body but her.

The King of *Poland* was therefore obliged to throw himself into the arms of the Senate. He made them two proposals by the Palatine of *Mariembourg*, the one that they should leave to him the disposition of the army of the Republick, whom he would pay two quarters advance out of his own revenue; and the other, that they should allow him to bring twelve thousand *Saxons* back into *Poland*. The Cardinal Primate gave an answer as severe, as the refusal of the King of *Sweden*. He told the Palatine of *Mariembourg* in the name of the Assembly, "That they were resolved  
"to send an embassy to *Charles XII.* that their  
"business now was to reconcile the King with  
" *Poland* and *Sweden*; that it would be of no  
"service to pay an army, which would not fight  
"for him, without orders from the Republick;  
"and for the *Saxons*, he would advise him to bring  
"none into *Poland*."

The King in this extremity was desirous of preserving at least the appearance of the royal authority. He sent one of his Chamberlains to *Charles*, to know of him, where and how his *Swedish* Majesty would receive the embassy of the



King his master and of the Republick. They had unhappily neglected to demand a pass-port for his chamberlain to the *Swedes*. And the King of *Sweden* imprisoned him, instead of giving him audience, and said that he expected to receive an embassy from the Republick, and not from King *Augustus*.

*Charles* then leaving garrisons behind him in some towns of *Lithuania*, advanced beyond *Grodno*, a place famous in *Europe* for the Dietes that are held there, but ill built and worse fortified.

At some miles from *Grodno* he met the embassy of the Republick, which consisted of five Senators. The *Waiwode Galefky*, and Count *Tarlo* who since died in *France*, were appointed to deliver it. The King gave them audience in his tent, with a pomp which he had always disdained, but then thought necessary. A Lieutenant General with an hundred drabans on horseback, who are the guards of the King of *Sweden*, went to meet the Ambassadors; they lighted off their horses within fifty foot of the royal tent, and were conducted between two lines of guards under arms to a great antichamber. A Major General introduced them from thence into a very large chamber, where the cieling, floors, and walls were all covered with *Persian* tapestry. The King received them upon a throne. He rose and took off his hat upon their first bowing; and then the King and the Ambassadors being covered, the *Waiwode* spoke first, and Count *Tarlo* after him. Their discourses were full of caution and obscurity; they did not once pronounce the name of the King of *Poland*, as they were determined neither to speak in his favour,



nor openly to complain of him, but only left *Charles* to guess at what they thought not proper to explain. The King treated each Ambassador in private with friendship and confidence. But when he came to give his answer to the Republick which sent them, and which did not enter into his measures with a submission so ready as he expected, he told them by Count *Piper*, that he would give an answer at *Warsaw*.

The same day he marched towards that town. This march was preceded by a *Manifesto*, which the Cardinal and his party spread over *Poland* in eight days. By this writing *Charles* invited all the *Poles* to join their revenge with his, and pretended to shew that their interest and his were the same. They were notwithstanding very different, but the *Manifesto* supported by a great party, by the disorder of the Senate, and the approach of the conqueror, made very strong impressions. They were obliged to own *Charles* for their protector, since he was resolved to be so, and it was well for them, that he contented himself with that title.

The Senators, who opposed *Augustus*, published this writing aloud even before his face, and the few who adhered to him kept silence. At last, when they heard that *Charles* was advancing by long marches, they all prepared in confusion to depart; the Cardinal left *Warsaw* one of the first; and the major part followed hastily; some fled to their own country seats waiting to see how things would terminate, and others to arm their friends. There remained with the King only the Ambassadors of the Emperor and the Czar, the Pope's *Nuncio*, and some few Bishops and Palatines,



who were attached to his fortune. He was forced to fly, and nothing yet had been decided in his favour. Before his departure he hastened to hold a Council with the small number of Senators, who still represented the Senate. But how zealous soever they were for his service, they were still *Poles*, and had all conceived so great an aversion to the *Saxon* troops, that they durst not allow him the liberty of bringing above six thousand men from thence for his defence; and they farther voted that these six thousand men should be commanded by the grand General of *Poland*, and immediately sent home after the conclusion of a peace. As to the armies of the Republick, they left the disposition of them to him.

Upon this resolution of the Council the King left *Warsaw*, being too weak to oppose the enemy, and little satisfied with the conduct of his own party. He straight published his orders for assembling the *Pospolite*, and armies which were scarce any thing but a bare name. There was nothing to be hoped for out of *Lithuania*, where the *Swedes* were posted. And the army of *Poland*, reduced to a small number of troops, wanted arms, provisions, and good will. The greatest part of the Nobility were intimidated, irresolute, or ill-disposed, and confined themselves to their own estates: Their King in vain, though authorized by the laws of the state, gave orders under pain of death to every gentleman in the country to appear on horseback, and follow him. It was now become a dispute, whether they owed him obedience. His chief dependance was upon the troops of his Electorate, where the form of government, being intirely absolute, left him under



no apprehensions of being disobeyed. He had already given private orders for twelve thousand Saxons, who were upon their march with all possible speed. He farther recalled the eight thousand he had promised to the Emperor to assist him in his wars against *France*, and which in the necessity he was reduced to, he was obliged to withdraw. This introduction of so many Saxons into *Poland*, was a sure means of alienating all mens affections, as it was a violation also of the law made by his own party, which allowed him but six thousand : But he knew very well, that if he was conqueror, they durst not complain ; and if he was conquered, they would never forgive his having introduced even six thousand. Whilst these soldiers were marching up in troops, and whilst he was flying from Palatinate to Palatinate to assemble the Nobility who adhered to him, the King of *Sweden* at last arrived before *Warsaw*, on the 5th of *May* 1702. The gates were opened to him upon the first summons. He sent away the *Polish* garrison, dismissed the city guard, every where posted guards of his own, ordered the inhabitants to bring in their arms, and content with having disarmed them, and not willing to exasperate them, he demanded no more of them than a contribution of an hundred thousand francs. King *Augustus* was then getting together his forces at *Cracow*, and was much surprized to see the Cardinal Primate one of the company. That man, whose heart burnt within him to finish the work he had began, pretended to keep up the decency of his character to the last, and to dethrone his King with all the respectful behaviour of a good subject. He told him that the King of



*Sweden* appeared disposed to a reasonable accommodation, and humbly begged leave that he might attend him. King *Augustus* granted him what he could not refuse, that is, the liberty to prejudice his Affairs.

The Cardinal Primate, thus covering the baseness of his conduct, by the addition of treachery, hastened to the King of *Sweden*, before whom he had never yet ventured to present himself. He saw his Majesty at *Praag*, not far from *Warsaw*, but without the ceremonies, which had been used towards the Ambassadors of the Republic. He found the conqueror clad in a coat of coarse blue cloth, with brass buttons gilt, jack-boots, and buff-skin gloves, that reached up to his elbows, in a room without hangings, in company with the Duke of *Holstein* his brother-in-law, Count *Piper* his first Minister, and several general officers. The King advanced some steps to meet the Cardinal, and they had a conference together standing, of about a quarter of an hour, which *Charles* put an end to by saying aloud, "I will never give the *Poles* peace, till they have elected another King." The Cardinal, who expected such a declaration, immediately signified it to all the Palatinates, assuring them he was extremely concerned at it, and at the same time laying before them the necessity of complying with the conqueror.

Upon this news the King of *Poland* saw plainly, that he must either lose his crown or preserve it by arms; and he used his utmost efforts to succeed in that great decision. All his *Saxon* troops were arrived from the frontiers of *Saxony*. The Nobility of the Palatinate of *Cracow*, where he



still remained, came in a body to offer him their services. He in person exhorted every one of these gentlemen to remember the oaths they had taken; and they assured him that they would spill the last drop of their blood in his defence. Fortified with these succours, and the troops which were called the army of the crown, he went for the first time to seek in person the King of Sweden; and he was not long before he found him, for he was already marching against him towards Cracow.

The two Kings met on the 19th of July 1702: in a very spacious plain near *Cliffau* between *Warsaw* and *Cracow*. *Augustus* had near four and twenty thousand men, and *Charles XII.* not above twelve thousand. The battle began with the playing of the artillery. Upon the first volley, which was discharged by the Saxons, the Duke of *Holstein* who commanded the Swedish horse, a young Prince of great courage and virtue, received a cannon-ball in the reins. The King enquired if he was dead, and was told that he was; he made no answer, but the tears fell from his eyes, and then covering his face for a moment with his hands, on a sudden he spurred his horse with fury, and rushed into the thickest of the enemy, at the head of his guards.

The King of *Poland* did all that could be expected from a Prince who fought for his crown. He thrice led up his troops in person to the charge; but the ascendant of *Charles XII.* carried it, and gained a complete victory. The enemy's camp, colours, and artillery, and *Augustus's* military chest, were left to him. He made no stay upon the field of battle, but marched strait



to *Cracow*, pursuing the King of *Poland*, who fled before him.

The citizens of *Cracow* were bold enough to shut their gates upon the conqueror. He caused them to be burst open, and took the castle by assault. His soldiers, the only men in the world who could abstain from pillage after a victory, did not offer the least ill-treatment to any one citizen; but the King made them pay sufficiently for the temerity of their resistance, by charging them with excessive contributions.

He departed from *Cracow* in the full resolution of pursuing *Augustus* without intermission. But within some miles from the city his horse fell under him, and broke his thigh. They were obliged to carry him back to *Cracow*, where he was confined to his bed for six weeks in the hands of his surgeons. This accident gave *Augustus* leisure to breathe a little. He caused it immediately to be spread throughout *Poland* and *Germany*, that *Charles XII.* was killed by his fall. This false report, which was credited for some time, filled all mens minds with astonishment and uncertainty. In this small interval he assembles all the orders of the Kingdom at *Mariembourg*, and then at *Lublin*, who had before been called together to *Sandomir*. The assembly was very large, as few of the Palatinates refused to send their Deputies thither. He regained almost all their inclinations by presents and promises, and by that affability, which is so necessary to absolute Kings to win their subjects affections, and to elective Kings to preserve them. The Diete were soon undeceived concerning the false report of the King of *Sweden's* death; but that great body was already



dy put in motion, and they suffered themselves to be carried along by the impulse they had received, and all its members swore to continue faithful to their King.

The Cardinal Primate himself, affecting still to appear attached to King *Augustus*, came to the Diete of *Lublin*; he kissed the King's hand, and made no scruple to take the oath with the rest. This oath consisted in swearing, that they had never attempted, nor ever would attempt any thing against *Augustus*. The King excused the Cardinal from the first part of the oath, and the Prelate blushed as he swore to the rest. The determination of this Diete was, that the Republick of *Poland* should maintain an army of fifty thousand men at their own expence for the service of their Prince; that they should allow the *Swedes* six weeks time to declare whether they intended peace or war, and the same term to the Princes of *Sapieha*, the first authors of the troubles in *Lithuania*, to come in and beg pardon of the King of *Poland*.

In the mean time *Charles XII.* recovered of his wound, and overturn'd all before him. Always fixt in his resolution of forcing the *Poles* themselves to dethrone their King, by the intrigues of the Cardinal Primate, he caused a new assembly to be called together at *Warsaw* to oppose that of *Lublin*. His Generals represented to him that the affair might thus be protracted to a tedious length, and at last vanish in delays; that during this time the *Moscovites*, were daily skirmishing with the troops he had left behind in *Livonia* and *Ingria*; that the event was not always favourable to the *Swedes*, and that his presence there; in all

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probability, would very soon become necessary, *Charles*, who was as steady in the execution of his projects, as he was brisk in his actions, answered, "Though I were to stay here fifty years, I would not leave the place 'till I had dethroned the King of *Poland*."

He left the assembly of *Warsaw* to dispute by discourses and writings with that of *Lublin*, and seek for precedents to justify their proceedings in the laws of the Kingdom, laws which are constantly equivocal, and interpreted by both parties according to their inclinations, and which success alone renders incontestable. For himself having augmented his victorious troops with six thousand horse and eight thousand foot, which he received from *Sweden*, he marched against the remains of the *Saxon* army he had beaten at *Cliffau*, which had gained time to rally and recruit whilst his fall from his horse had confined him to his bed. This army shun'd his approach, and retir'd towards *Prussia* on the north-west of *Warsaw*. The river *Bug* lay between him and his enemies. *Charles* swam over it at the head of his horse, whilst the foot went to seek a ford somewhat higher. On *May 1, 1703*. he came up with the *Saxons* at a place called *Pultusk*. They were commanded by General *Stenau* to the number of about ten thousand. The King of *Sweden* in his precipitate march had brought no more along with him, being confident that a less number would have sufficed. The terror of his arms was so great, that one half of the *Saxon* army ran away at his approach, without staying for the battle. General *Stenau* stood firm for a while with two regiments, but the moment after, he

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was drawn along in the general flight of his army, which was dispersed before it was conquered. The *Swedes* did not take a thousand prisoners, nor kill six hundred men, having more difficulty in pursuing than defeating them.

*Augustus*, who had nothing left him, but the scattered remains of the *Saxons* beaten on all sides, retired in haste to *Thorn*, an ancient City of Royal *Prussia*, situate upon the *Weissel*, and under the protection of *Poland*. *Charles* immediately prepared to besiege it. The King of *Poland* not thinking himself secure withdrew into *Saxony*. In the mean time *Charles*, who made nothing of so many brisk marches, swimming over rivers, and hurrying along with his foot mounted behind his horse, was not able to bring up his cannon before *Thorn*; but was obliged to wait 'till it was sent him from *Sweden* by sea.

Whilst he was waiting for it, he took up his quarters within some Miles of the City, and would often advance too near the ramparts, to view it. The plain dress he always wore was of greater service to him than he had ever imagined in these dangerous walks. It hindered him from being taken notice of, and pointed out by the enemy, as a person to be fired at. One day having approached very near with one of his Generals named *Lieven*, who was dress'd in scarlet trim'd with gold, and fearing lest the General should be perceived, he straight ordered him to walk behind him, moved by that magnanimity so natural to him, which even hindered him from reflecting that he exposed his own life to a manifest danger to save that of his subject.

*Lieven*



*Lieven* discerning his error too late in having put on a remarkable habit, which exposed all those who were with him, and fearing equally for the King in whatever place he was, hesitated while whether he ought to obey him; in the moment while this contest lasted, the King takes him by the arm, puts himself before him, and hides him; at the same instant a cannon ball which came in flank, struck the General dead upon that very spot, which the King had scarcely quitted. The death of this man, killed directly in his stead, and because he had a mind to save him, contributed not a little to confirm him in the notion he ever held of absolute predestination, and made him believe, that his fate, which protected him in so singular a manner, reserved him for the execution of greater things.

Every thing succeeded with him, and his negotiations and arms were equally fortunate. He was in a manner present throughout all *Poland*, for his grand Mareschal *Renchild* was in the heart of those dominions with a great body of the army. Near thirty thousand *Swedes* under different Generals, dispersed towards the north and the east upon the frontiers of *Moscovy*, withstood the efforts of the whole empire of *Russia*; and *Charles* was in the west at the other end of *Poland*, at the head of the best part of his troops.

The King of *Denmark*, tied down by the treaty of *Travendal*, which his weakness hindered him from breaking, continued silent. The Elector of *Brandenbourg*, who had acquired the title of King of *Prussia*, without any increase of power, durst not



not express his disgust \* at seeing the King of Sweden so near his dominions. His grandfather had been deprived of the best part of *Pomerania* by *Gustavus Adolphus*: And he had no security for the rest but the moderation of *Charles*. Farther towards the south-west between the Rivers of *Elbe* and *Wefer* lay the Dutchy of *Bremen*, the last territory of the ancient conquests of the *Swedes*, filled with strong garrisons, which opened to the conqueror a free passage into *Saxony* and the *Empire*. Thus from the *German* ocean almost to the mouth of the *Boristhenes*, which makes the breadth of *Europe*, and to the gates of *Moscow*, all was in consternation, and every moment expecting an entire revolution. His vessels were masters of the *Baltick*, and employed in transporting prisoners.

\* If the Elector of *Brandenbourg* had been disgusted against the King of *Sweden*, he might easily have joined the Czar or the King of *Poland*, and he had twenty thousand Men who, at such a juncture, would have incommoded *Charles*, not a little. These Troops, indeed, were distributed in *Italy* and the *Low Countries*, but it was in the Elector's power to recall them when he pleased. It happens likewise to be a certain Fact that *Gustavus Adolphus* never took *Pomerania* from any Elector of *Brandenbourg*, for whilst that King lived, the last Duke of *Pomerania* was likewise living: But if *Gustavus Adolphus* had in reality forced *Pomerania* from the Elector of *Brandenbourg*, he could not be the grandfather of the Elector mentioned in this Passage, who was the late King of *Prussia*, because it is very certain that the Elector *Frederick William*, father of this Prince, inherited *Pomerania* conformably to the stipulations in the Treaty between the Houses of *Brandenbourg* and *Pomerania*.

To these Remarks, *Monf. Voltaire* makes the following Answer. The Author of this Note forgets that *Gustavus Adolphus* took *Stralsund* and all *Pomerania*; compelled the Grandfather of the first King of *Prussia*, to submit to what he could not prevent, and that the House of *Brandenbourg*, on whom the Heirship of all *Pomerania* was devolved, was obliged to give up half of that Country to *Sweden*, by the Treaties of *Westphalia*.

from



from *Poland* into his own country. *Sweden* alone was calm in the midst of these great emotions, tasting the sweets of a profound peace, and enjoying the glory of her King, without bearing the weight of it; since his victorious troops were paid and maintained at the expence of the conquered.

In this general silence of the north before the arms of *Charles XII.* the city of *Dantzick* ventured to disoblige him. Fourteen frigats and forty transport vessels were bringing the King a supply of six thousand men, with cannon and ammunition to finish the siege of *Thorn*. These succours must necessarily pass up the *Weissel*. At the mouth of this river lyes *Dantzick*, a rich and free town enjoying with *Elbing* and *Thorn* the same privileges in *Poland*, as the Imperial towns have in *Germany*. Its liberty had been attacked by turns, by the *Danes* and *Swedes*, and some *German Princes*, and was preserved only by the jealousy which these powers had of each other. Count *Steinbock*, one of the *Swedish* Generals, assembled the magistrates in the King's name, demanding a passage for the troops, and some ammunition. The magistrates by an usual imprudence in those who treat with their superiors in strength, durst neither absolutely refuse, nor expressly grant what he demanded. General *Steinbock* made them give by force more than he had asked; and farther exacted from the town a contribution of a hundred thousand crowns by way of recompence for their imprudent denial. At last the recruits, the cannon and ammunition being arrived before *Thorn*, the siege was begun on the 22d of *September*.



\* *Rovel*, governor of the place, defended it a month with a garrison of five thousand men. And then it was forced to surrender at discretion. The garrison were made prisoners of war, and sent into Sweden. *Rovel* was presented to the King unarmed. His Majesty who never lost an opportunity of doing honour to merit in his enemies, gave him a sword with his own hand, made him a considerable present in money, and sent him away upon his parole. The honour the town of *Thorn* had, in having formerly produced *Copernicus* the founder of the true system of the world, had no influence upon a conqueror, too little conversant in such matters, and who only knew how to reward valour. This poor petty town was condemned to pay forty thousand crowns; an excessive contribution for such a place.

*Elbing*, a town built upon an arm of the *Weissel*, founded by the *Teutonic* Knights, and also annexed to *Poland*, did not make a proper advantage of the *Dantzickers* Inadvertency, but hesitated too long about giving passage to the *Swedish* troops; and was more severely punished than *Dantzick* itself. *Charles* entered there in person on the 13th of *December* at the head of four thousand men armed with bayonets at the end of their muskets. The inhabitants in a consternation fell upon their knees in the streets; and begged for mercy. He took from them all their arms, lodged his soldiers in their houses, and then, having called the magistrates together, obliged them to raise that very day a contribution of two hundred and sixty thousand

\* The Critick on this History of *Mons. Voltaire*, affirms his Name to be *Robel*, and that he was a Native of *Brandenbourg*.

*Voltaire* replies, that the Name was always pronounced *Rovel*.



crowns. There were in the town two hundred pieces of cannon, and four hundred thousand weight of gun-powder, which he seized. The gaining a victory would not have brought him so many advantages, and all these successes were forerunners to the dethroning of King *Augustus*.

The Cardinal had scarce taken an oath to his King, that he would attempt nothing against him, before he went to the assembly at *Warsaw*, but still under the pretence of peace. He was attended by three thousand soldiers raised upon his own estate, but upon coming thither talked of nothing but concord and obedience. At last he threw off the mask, and on the 14th of *February* 1704, declared in the name of the assembly, *Augustus* Elector of Saxony incapable of wearing the crown of Poland. They then pronounced with a common voice, that the throne was vacant. The session of that day was not yet ended, when a courier from the King of *Sweden* brought a letter from his Majesty to the assembly. The Cardinal open'd the letter, which contained an order in form of a request to elect Prince *James Sobieski* for their King. They were disposed to obey with joy, and even fixed the day of the election. The Prince was then at *Breslau* in *Silesia*, waiting with impatience for the crown, which his father had wore. He was complimented upon it, and some flatterers had even already given him the title of Majesty, in speaking to him. As he was one day hunting at some leagues from *Breslau* with Prince *Constantine* one of his brothers, thirty *Saxon* horsemen, sent privately by King *Augustus*, broke out of a sudden upon them from a neighbouring wood, surrounded the two Princes, and carried them off with-

out



at resistance. Fresh horses stood ready at a distance, upon which they were immediately carried to *Lipsick*, and close confined. This step at once broke all the measures of *Charles*, the Cardinal, and the assembly at *Warsaw*.

Fortune, which makes sport with crowned heads, threw King *Augustus* almost at the same time upon the point of being taken himself. He was at dinner within three leagues of *Cracow*, relying upon an advanced guard posted at some distance, when General *Renchild* came suddenly upon him, after having carried off the guard. The King of *Poland* had but just time to get on horseback with ten others. General *Renchild* pursued him four days, ready to seize upon him every moment. The King fled to *Sendomir*, and the Swedish General followed him thither; and it was a singular piece of good fortune, that he made his escape.

In the mean time the King's party treated that of the Cardinal, and were reciprocally treated by them, as traitors to their country. The army of the crown was divided between the two factions. *Augustus*, forced at last to accept of succours from the *Moscovites*, repented that he had not applied to them sooner. Sometimes he marched into *Saxony*, where his forces were exhausted; and sometimes he would return into *Poland*, where they durst not assist him. On the other side the King of *Sweden* reigned in *Poland* calm and victorious, and more absolutely than *Augustus* had ever done.

Count *Piper*, who was as much of a politician, as his master was of a hero, laid hold of the opportunity to advise *Charles XII.* to take upon himself the crown of *Poland*. He represented to him how



how easily he might bring it about with a victorious army, and a powerful party in the heart of a kingdom, which he had already brought under subjection. He tempted him with the title of *Defender of the Evangelical Religion*, a name which flattered the ambition of *Charles*. It was easy for him, he said, to do in *Poland* what *Gustavus Vasa* had done in *Sweden*; to introduce *Lutheranism*, and break the chains of the people now slaves to the Nobility and Clergy. *Charles* gave way to the temptation for a moment; but glory was his idol. He sacrificed his interest to it, and the pleasure he would have had in taking *Poland* from the *Pope*. He told Count *Piper* that he chose rather to give away kingdoms than gain them, and added smiling, "You were made for the Minister of an Italian Prince."

*Charles* lay still near *Thorn*, in that part of Royal *Prussia* which belongs to *Poland*; he thence observed all that was transacted at *Warsaw*, and kept the neighbouring powers in awe. Prince *Alexander*, brother of the two *Sobieskis* who were carried off in *Silesia*, came to demand vengeance of him. The King promised it him the more readily, as he judged it easy, and that he should be thereby revenged himself. But being impatient to give *Poland* a King, he offered the throne to Prince *Alexander*, which fortune seemed bent to deny to his brother. He did not in the least expect a refusal. But Prince *Alexander* told him that nothing should ever engage him to make an advantage of his elder brother's misfortunes. The King of *Sweden*, Count *Piper*, all his friends, and especially the young Palatine of *Posnania*,  
Stanislaus



## CHARLES XII. 81

Stanislaus Lecfinsky, pressed him to accept of it. But he continued firm in his resolution. The neighbouring Princes were astonished at such an unexpected refusal, and knew not whom they should admire most; a King of Sweden, who at two and twenty years of age gave away the crown of Poland, or Prince Alexander, who refused to accept it.

*The End of the Second Book.*

THE



THE  
HISTORY  
OF  
CHARLES XII  
KING of SWEDEN.

BOOK III.

The CONTENTS.

Stanislaus Lecfinsky chosen King of Poland; the death of the Cardinal Primate: the fine retreat of General Shullembourg; the exploits of the Czar; the foundation of Petersbourg; the battle of Fravenstad; Charles enters Saxony; the peace of Alranstadt; Augustus abdicates the crown, and in favour of Stanislaus; General Patkul, the Czar's Plenipotentiary, is broke up on the wheel and quartered; Charles receives the Ambassadors of foreign Princes in Saxony; he goes alone to Dresden to visit Augustus, before his departure.

**Y**OUNG Stanislaus Lecfinsky was then deputed by the assembly at Warsaw to give an account to the King of Sweden of his



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ral differences which had arose among them  
nce Prince *James* was carried away. *Stanislaus*  
d a very engaging aspect, full of bravery and  
sweetness, with an air of probity and openness,  
which is doubtless the greatest of all outward ad-  
vantages, and adds a greater weight to words  
an eloquence it self. The discretion with  
which he spoke of King *Augustus*, of the assem-  
bly, the Cardinal Primate, and the different inte-  
rests which divided *Poland*, made an impression  
on *Charles XII.* He was a Prince who under-  
stood mankind exceedingly well, and had suc-  
ceeded in the choice he had made of his Generals  
and Ministers. He designedly prolonged the con-  
ference, that he might the better sound the ge-  
nius of the young deputy. And after the audi-  
ence he said aloud, "That he had not seen a  
man so fit to reconcile all parties." He imme-  
diately made enquiry into the character of the  
Polish *Lecfinsky*; and was informed that he was  
a person of great courage, and inured to fatigue;  
that he lay constantly upon a kind of straw mat-  
tresses, requiring no service of his domesticks about  
his person; that he was temperate to a degree  
little known to that climate; liberal, and adored  
by his vassals; and the only Nobleman perhaps  
in *Poland*, who had any friends, at a time when  
no regard was paid to any ties but those of interest  
and faction.

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This character, which in many particulars re-  
sembled his own, determined him entirely. He  
conferred with no body, but without any caballing,  
even publick deliberation, said to two of  
his Generals, shewing them *Lecfinsky*; "See  
there is the King whom the *Poles* shall have."  
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His resolution was fixt, and *Stanislaus* as yet knew nothing of the matter, when the Cardinal Primate came to wait upon *Charles*. The Primate was King during the *interregnum*, and was desirous of prolonging his transient authority. *Charles* asked him whom he thought in *Poland* deserving of the crown. I know but three, answered the Cardinal. The first is the Prince *Sapieha*; but his imperious, cruel and despotick humour will never agree well with a free people. The second is *Lubomirsky*, Grand General of the Crown; but he is too old, and suspected of loving money too much. The third is the Palatine of *Poznan*; more deserving indeed than the other two, if his want of experience did not render him incapable of governing so capricious a nation. The Cardinal thus excluded all whom he proposed, and would have them believed unfit to reign. whom he had pronounced alone worthy of it. The King of *Sweden* concluded the conversation by telling him, that *Stanislaus Lecfinsky* should be their King.

The Cardinal had scarce left the King before he received a courier from the lady, who was absolute over him. She told him in her letter that she was determined to marry her daughter to the son of *Lubomirsky*, and conjured him to employ all his interest with the King to give the crown of *Poland* to the father. The letter came too late, the Cardinal had given such impressions of *Lubomirsky*, as he could never efface. He used his utmost address to draw the King of *Sweden* insensibly into the new interest which he embraced, and strove more especially to divert him from the choice of *Stanislaus*. But what have you, say



he King, to object against him? Sir, says the Prelate, he is too young. The King daily answered, "He is much about my age," turned his back upon the Prelate, and immediately dispatched Count *Hoorn* to signify to the assembly at *Warsaw*, that they must elect a King in five days, and that they must chuse *Stanislaus Lecsin-* *sky*. Count *Hoorn* arrived upon the 7th of *July*, and fixed the day of the election to the 12th, as if he had ordered the decampment of a battalion. The Cardinal Primate, disappointed of the fruit of so many intrigues, returned to the assembly, where he left no stone unturned to make the election, wherein he had no share, prove abortive. But the King of *Sweden* coming himself *incognito* to *Warsaw*, he was obliged to be silent. All that the Primate could do was to absent himself from the election; he determined to act as neuter, without appearing to assist or oppose the resolution of the King of *Sweden*, carrying himself even between *Augustus* and *Stanislaus*, and waiting for an opportunity of prejudicing them both.

On *Saturday* the 12th of *July*, the day appointed for the election, about three in the afternoon the assembly met at *Colo*, the place designed for the ceremony, and the Bishop of *Posnania* presided in stead of the Primate. He came attended with several persons of distinction, and a large body of gentlemen of the party. The King of *Sweden* mixt with them that he might in secret enjoy the fruits of his power. Count *Hoorn* and two other general officers assisted publickly at the solemnity, as Ambassadors extraordinary from *Charles* to the Republick. The session lasted 'till nine in the evening; and the Bishop of *Posnania* put an end to



at by declaring in the name of the Diete *Stanislaus* elected King of Poland. *Charles XII.* was the first in the crowd to cry out *Vivat*; they threw up their hats into the air, and the noise of the acclamations quite stifled the cries of the opposers.

It was of no service to the Cardinal Primate, and those who had a mind to continue neutrals, that they had absented themselves from the election. They were all of them forced the next day to come and pay homage to the new King, who received them as if he had been thoroughly satisfied with their conduct. The greatest mortification they had was, that they were obliged to wait upon him to the King of *Sweden's* quarters. His Majesty gave all the honours to the King he had made, which were due to a King of *Poland*; and to add a greater weight to his new dignity, assigned him money and troops.

The name of King made no alteration in the manners of *Stanislaus*; it only caused him to turn his thoughts somewhat more towards war. A storm had placed him upon the throne, and another might drive him thence. He had one half of his Kingdom yet to conquer, and was to secure himself in the other; and being treated as a Sovereign at *Warsaw*, and a rebel at *Sandomir*, he prepared, by force of arms; to make himself acknowledged by all the world.

*Charles XII.* immediately departed from *Warsaw* to finish the conquest of *Poland*. He had fixed the general rendezvous of his army before *Leopold*, the capital of the great Palatinate of *Russia*, a place considerable in itself, and much more so for the riches it contained. It was thought that it would hold out fifteen days, by means of the

fort



fortifications which King *Augustus* had made there. The conqueror sat down before it on *September 5.* and the next day carried it by assault; and all who resisted were put to the sword. The victorious troops, who were now masters of the town, did not disband to run after pillage, notwithstanding the report of the treasures which were in *Leopold*; but ranged themselves in order of battle in the great square. There the remains of the garrison came to surrender themselves prisoners of war. The King then proclaimed his orders by sound of trumpet, that all the inhabitants, who had any effects belonging to King *Augustus* or his adherents, should bring them in person before night came on, under pain of death. The measures were so well taken, that few ventured to disobey him, and they brought his Majesty four hundred chests filled with gold and silver coin, plate and other valuable effects.

The beginning of *Stanislaus's* reign was almost the same day made remarkable by a very different event. Some affairs which absolutely required his presence had obliged him to continue at *Warsaw*. He had with him his mother, his wife, and his two daughters, of which the youngest was then but a year old, and has since been Queen of *France*. The Cardinal Primate, the Bishop of *Poznania*, and some great men of *Poland* made up his new court. His guards consisted of six thousand *Polanders* of the army of the Crown, who were lately brought over into his service; and whose fidelity he had not yet made trial of. General *Hoorn*, the Governor of the town, had not with him besides above fifteen hundred *Swedes*. They were at *Warsaw* in perfect tranquillity, and



*Stanislaus* reckoned to depart thence in a few days to go to the conquest of *Leopold*: When all of a sudden he received information that a numerous army was drawing near to the town. This was King *Augustus*, who by a fresh effort, and one of the finest marches that ever General made, having eluded the King of *Sweden*, was coming up with twenty thousand men to fall upon *Warsaw*, and carry off his rival.

*Warsaw* was very ill fortified, and the *Polish* troops, who defended it, were not to be relied on. *Augustus* had intelligence within the town that if *Stanislaus* tarried, he was sure to be undone. He sent his family therefore into *Posnania* under the guard of those *Polish* troops, in whom he could put most confidence. The Cardinal Primate fled one of the first to the frontiers of *Prussia*. Several gentlemen took different roads. The new King went directly to *Charles XII.* learning early to suffer disgrace, and forced to quit his capital within six weeks after he had been there advanced to the sovereignty. The Bishop of *Posnania* alone could not escape, being confined to *Warsaw* by a dangerous illness. One part of the six thousand *Poles* followed *Stanislaus*, and another conducted his family. They sent those into *Posnania*, whose fidelity they would not expose to the temptation of returning into the service of King *Augustus*. As to General *Hoorn*, who was governor of *Warsaw* in the name of the King of *Sweden*, he took up his residence in the castle with his fifteen hundred *Swedes*.

*Augustus* entered the capital as a Sovereign incensed and victorious. Every inhabitant was taxed beyond his abilities, and ill treated by the soldiers.



diers. The Cardinal's palace and all the houses of the confederate Lords, with all their possessions both in town and country, were given up to plunder. But what was most extraordinary in this transient revolution, the Pope's Nuncio, who attended upon King *Augustus*, demanded in the name of his master, that the Bishop of *Posnania* should be given up into his hands, as subject to the jurisdiction of the court of *Rome*, as he was a Bishop and favourer of a Prince advanced to the throne by the arms of a *Lutheran*.

The court of *Rome*, which has always endeavoured to increase its temporal power by means of the spiritual, had long established a kind of jurisdiction in *Poland*, with the Pope's Nuncio at the head of it. These Ministers never failed to lay hold of all favourable conjunctures to extend their power, which was revered by the multitude, tho' always contested by men of better understanding. They had claimed a right of judging in all ecclesiastical causes, and had in times of trouble usurped several other prerogatives in which they maintained themselves 'till about the year 1728. when these abuses were retrenched, which indeed are never reformed, 'till they are become altogether intolerable.

King *Augustus*, who was very glad to punish the Bishop of *Posnania* without offending against decency, and at the same time to do an acceptable service to the court of *Rome*, though he would readily have opposed it upon any other occasion, gives up the *Polish* Prelate into the hands of the Nuncio. The Bishop, after having seen his palace plundered, was carried by the soldiers to the *Italian* Minister's lodging, and from thence sent into *Saxony*, where he died.



Count *Hoorn* stood the constant fire of the enemy in the castle, wherein he was enclosed; but the place at last being no longer able to hold out, he was forced to beat a parley, and remained prisoner of war, with his fifteen hundred *Swedes*. This was the first advantage that King *Augustus* gained, in the torrent of his ill fortune, against the victorious arms of his enemy.

Count *Hoorn*, released upon his parole, came to *Leopold*, within a small time after *Stanislaus*. He took the liberty of complaining a little to the King of *Sweden*, that his Majesty had not relieved *Warsaw*. "Be not under much concern about it, my poor Count," (says the King) "we must let King *Augustus* do something by way of amusement, or otherwise he would grow tired of having us so long in his neighbourhood; but take my word for it, he shall not be the better for this advantage."

In reality this last effort of *Augustus* was but the blaze of a fire that was going out. His troops, which were hastily got together, were either *Poles* ready to abandon him upon the first disgrace, or *Saxon* recruits who had never yet seen any service, or vagabond *Cosaques* fitter to plunder the conquered, than to conquer. All trembled at the name of the King of *Sweden*.

The conqueror, accompanied by King *Stanislaus*, went in quest of his enemy at the head of the best part of his troops. The *Saxon* army fled constantly before him. The towns for thirty miles round sent him their keys, and no day passed which was not signalized with some advantage. Successes began to grow too familiar to *Charles*. He said it was rather hunting than fighting.



fighting, and complained of not gaining a victory on more difficult Terms.

*Augustus* committed the care of his army for some time to Count *Shullembourg*, a very able General; and indeed he stood in need of all his experience at the head of an army under such discouragements. He was under more concern to preserve his master's troops than to conquer; he acted by stratagem, and the two Kings with vigour. He marched off unknown to them, seized upon advantageous passages, and sacrificed some horse, to give time to his foot to retire with safety.

After several artifices and countermarches he found himself near *Punitz* in the Palatinate of *Pofnania*, imagining that the King of *Sweden* and King *Stanislaus* were above fifty leagues off from him. But coming thither, he learnt that the two Kings had marched those fifty leagues in nine days, and were ready to fall upon him with ten or twelve thousand horse. *Shullembourg* had not a thousand horse, nor above eight thousand foot, and was to keep his ground against a superior army, the name of the King of *Sweden*, and the natural fears which so many defeats had raised in the *Saxons*. He was ever of opinion, though opposed to it by the *German* Generals, that the foot might stand against the horse in an open campaign, even without the benefit of *Chevaux de Frise*; and he ventured to make trial of it that day against the victorious horse commanded by the two Kings, and the most experienced of the *Swedish* Generals. He posted himself so advantageously, that he could not be surrounded; his first rank bent one knee upon the ground, and was armed with pikes and muskets; the soldiers stood extremely close, and presented



presented to the enemies horse a kind of rampart pointed with pikes and bayonets; the second rank, bending a little upon the shoulders of the first, fired over their heads, and the third standing upright, fired at the same time behind the other two. The *Swedes* fell upon the *Saxons* with their usual impetuosity, who waited for them unshaken; the discharge of the muskets, the pikes and bayonets startled the horses, and set them a capering instead of advancing. By this means the *Swedes* made their attack in disorder, and the *Saxons* defended themselves by keeping their ranks.

If *Charles* had ordered his horse to alight, the army of *Shullembourg* must have been inevitably destroyed. There was nothing the General was so much afraid of, and he every moment expected that the enemy would have taken that resolution. But neither the King of *Sweden*, who had so often practised all the stratagems of war, nor any of his Generals ever thought of it. This unequal fight of a body of horse against the foot, though often interrupted and renewed, lasted three hours. The *Swedes* lost more horses than men. *Shullembourg* at last gave way, but his troops were not broken. He drew them up into an oblong battalion, and, though he had received five wounds in the engagement, he retired in good order in this form about midnight to the small town of *Gurau* within three leagues of the field of battle. And he scarce began to breathe in that place, before the two Kings appeared suddenly at his heels.

Beyond *Gurau*, towards the river *Oder*, lay a thick wood, through which the *Saxon* General saved his fatigued army. The *Swedes* without pausing pursued him through the thickets, making



ing their way with difficulty through places which were scarce passable by people on foot; and the *Saxons* had not crossed the wood above five hours before the *Swedish Horse*. On the other side the wood runs the river *Parts* at the foot of a village named *Rutsen*. *Shullembourg* had sent before in all haste to get the boats together, and carried his troops across the river, which were already half lost. *Charles* was come to one side of the river by that time *Shullembourg* had got to the other. No General ever retreated with so much art, nor did ever conqueror so briskly pursue his enemy. The reputation of *Shullembourg* depended upon his escaping from the King of *Sweden*, and the King thought his glory concerned in taking *Shullembourg* and the rest of his army. He lost no time, but swam his horse cross the river. And thus the *Saxons* were enclosed between the river *Parts*, and the great river of *Oder*, which has its source in *Silesia*, and is in this place very deep and rapid.

The loss of *Shullembourg* appeared inevitable; he still strove all he could to extricate himself from this extremity by one of those turns of art, which are as valuable as victories, and the more glorious, because fortune has no share in them. He had not above four thousand men left; a mill, which he filled with granadiers, lay on his right hand, and a morass on his left; he had a *Fossé* before him, and his rear-guard was upon the banks of the *Oder*. He had no bridges of boats to throw over the river, but in the evening gave orders for planks. *Charles* upon his arrival immediately attacks the mill in full persuasion that, after he had taken it, the *Saxons* must either per-



rish in the river, or die sword in hand, or at least surrender themselves prisoners at discretion with their General. In the mean while the planks were got ready, and the Saxons passed the *Oder* over them in the night; and when *Charles* had forced the mill, he found no more of the enemies army. The two Kings honoured this retreat with their commendations, and it is spoken of to this day in the empire with admiration. And *Charles* could not help saying, “*Shullembourg* has conquered us to day.”

But what was thus glorious to *Shullembourg*, was of very little service to King *Augustus*. He once more abandoned *Poland* to his enemies, withdrew into *Saxony*, and repaired the fortifications of *Dresden* with precipitation, already with reason trembling for the capital of his hereditary dominions.

Thus was *Poland* subdued by *Charles XII*. His Generals after his example had beaten several small bodies of *Moscovites* in *Courland*, who ever since the great battle of *Narva* had not shewn themselves but in small companies, and made war in those quarters like the vagabond *Tartars*, who plunder and run away, and appear again but to repeat their flight.

Wherever the *Swedes* were, they thought themselves secure of victory, though they were but twenty against a hundred. Under these happy conjunctures *Stanislaus* prepared for his coronation. The fortune, which had given him the election at *Warsaw*, and since had driven him thence, called him back once more thither to the acclamations of a number of the nobility, whom the fate of arms attached to him. A Diete was appointed



appointed to meet there, and all other obstacles were removed ; only the court of *Rome* were disposed to cross it.

It was natural to imagine, that this court should declare in favour of King *Augustus*, who from a Protestant was turned *Roman Catholic* to gain the crown in opposition to *Stanislaus*, who was placed upon the throne by the great enemy of the *Romish* Religion. *Clement XI.* the then Pope, sent briefs to all the Prelates of *Poland*, and in particular to the Cardinal Primate, by which he threatned them with excommunication, if they presumed to assist at the consecration of *Stanislaus*, or form any attempt against the Prerogatives of King *Augustus*.

The Primate, at that time retired to *Dantzick*, was suspected of having occasioned these briefs to be brought from *Rome* in order to re-kindle a fire, which he himself durst not blow up. If these briefs were delivered to the Bishops that were at *Warsaw*, there was cause to apprehend, that some of them would obey them through weakness, and the major part lay hold of the opportunity of being more difficult to be brought over to *Stanislaus's* interest, in proportion as they should become more necessary. All possible precaution was therefore taken to hinder these letters of the Pope from being received at *Warsaw*. A *Franciscan* privately received them, and undertook to deliver them into the Bishops own Hands. He straight presented one to the Suffragan of *Chelm*. This Prelate, who was fixed in the interest of King *Stanislaus*, presented it to his Majesty unopened. The King sent for the monk, and asked him how he durst undertake to deliver a writing of this nature?



The *Franciscan* answered, he did it by order of his General. *Stanislaus* bid him for the future pay a greater regard to the orders of his King, than to those of the General of the *Franciscans*, and sent him out of the town that moment.

The same day a placart was published by the King of *Sweden*, by which all ecclesiasticks both secular and regular in *Warsaw* were forbid to intermeddle with affairs of state under very severe penalties. And for the greater security he caused guards to be posted at the doors of all the Prelates houses, and forbad any stranger to enter into the town. He took upon himself the exercise of these small severities that there might not be any difference between *Stanislaus* and the Clergy upon his first coming to the crown. He said that he refresh'd himself from the fatigues of war, by giving a check to the intrigues of the court of *Rome*, and that he must fight against it with paper, as against other Princes by real arms.

The Cardinal Primate was solicited by *Charles* and *Stanislaus* to perform the ceremony of the coronation. But he did not think it convenient to quit *Dantzick* to consecrate a King, who had been chosen against his inclinations; but as it was always his policy to do nothing without having some pretence for it, he had a mind to provide a lawful excuse for his refusal. He caused the Pope's brief to be fixed in the night-time to the gate of his own house. The Magistracy of *Dantzick* in a great rage made enquiry after the persons, who had done it, but they could not be found. The Primate pretended to be mighty angry, but in reality was very well pleased. He had a reason for not consecrating the new King, and



and at the same time kept fair with *Charles XII*, *Augustus*, *Stanislaus*, and the Pope. He died within a few days after, leaving his country in a terrible confusion; and as politicians themselves have sometimes remorse in their last moments, he wrote to King *Augustus* upon his death-bed to ask his pardon.

The Coronation was solemnized quietly and magnificently on *October 4. 1705*, in the town of *Warsaw*, notwithstanding the usual custom in *Poland* of crowning their Kings at *Cracow*. *Stanislaus Lecfinsky* and his wife *Charlotte Opalinska* were crowned King and Queen of *Poland* by the hands of the Archbishop of *Leopold*, assisted by several other Prelates. *Charles XII.* was present at the ceremony *incognito*, as he had been at the election; the only fruit he reaped from his conquests.

Whilst he was thus giving a King to the conquered *Poles*, and *Denmark* did not presume to trouble him; whilst the King of *Prussia* courted his friendship, and *Augustus* was retired to his hereditary dominions; the Czar grew every day more formidable. He had feebly assisted *Augustus* in *Poland*, but had made powerful diversions in *Ingria*.

He not only began to be a great soldier himself, but also to teach his *Moscovites* the art of war: Discipline was established in his troops; he had good engineers, a serviceable artillery, and a great many good officers; and had learnt the great art of subsisting his armies. Some of his Generals both knew how to fight, and, if occasion required, to decline it; and besides, he had got together a fleet which was able to make head against the *Swedes* in the *Baltick Sea*.



Grown strong by all these advantages which were owing to his genius only, and the absence of the King of *Sweden*, he took *Narva* by assault, on *August 21, 1704*, after a regular siege, having prevented its being relieved either by sea or land. As soon as the soldiers were masters of the town they fell to plunder, and gave themselves up to the most enormous barbarities. The Czar ran from place to place to put a stop to the disorder and massacre. He himself snatched the women out of the hands of the soldiers, who were going to cut their throats, after having ravished them. He was even obliged to kill with his own hands several *Moscovites*, who did not hearken to his orders. They yet shew the table in the town-house at *Narva*, upon which he laid his sword, as he entered, and tell the words which he spoke to the Citizens, who flocked thither after him: "It is not, says he, with the blood of the inhabitants, that my sword is stained, but with that of the *Moscovites*, whom I have shed to save your lives.

The Czar aspired at greater Atchievements than the destruction of towns. He was at that time laying the foundations of a city not far from *Narva*, in the midst of his new conquests. This was the city of *Petersburg*, which he has since made the seat of his residence, and the center of his trade. 'Tis situate between *Finland* and *Ingria*, in a fenny island, around which the *Neva* divides it self into several branches, before it falls into the Gulph of *Finland*. He drew himself the plan of the town, the fortrefs, the port, the keys which adorn it, and the forts which defend the entrance into it. This desert and uncultivated island, which was  
2
nothing



nothing but a heap of mud in the short summer  
 of those climates, and in winter a frozen pool,  
 which was not to be approached by land, but by  
 passing over wild forests and deep morasses, and  
 had been 'till then the habitation of bears and  
 wolves, was in 1703. filled with upwards of three  
 hundred thousand men, whom the Czar had call-  
 ed together from the farthest parts of his domi-  
 nions. The peasants of the Kingdom of *Astracan*,  
 and those who inhabit the frontiers of *China*,  
 were transported to *Petersburg*. He was obliged  
 to break through forests, to open ways, to dry up  
 moors, to raise banks, before he could lay the  
 foundations of the town. The whole was a force  
 put upon nature. But the Czar was resolved to  
 people a country, which did not seem designed to  
 be inhabited by men. Neither the inundations which  
 ruined his works, nor the barrenness of the soil,  
 nor the ignorance of the workmen, nor even a  
 mortality which carried off two hundred thousand  
 of his men at his first setting out, could shake his  
 fixt resolution. It is not easy to foresee, whether  
 this colony will long subsist; but posterity will  
 stand astonished at its being founded amidst so  
 many obstacles, as nature, the genius of the peo-  
 ple, and an unfortunate war, had raised against  
 it. *Petersburg* was become a city in 1705. and  
 its port was filled with vessels. The Emperor  
 drew strangers thither in great numbers by the  
 rewards he gave them, bestowing lands upon some,  
 houses upon others, and encouraging all the artists,  
 which came to civilize that savage climate. Above  
 all, he had made it inaccessible to the efforts of  
 the enemy. The *Swedish* Generals, who frequent-  
 ly beat his troops in every other quarter, were not  
 able



able to do the least damage to this growing colony. It enjoyed a perfect calm in the midst of the war which surrounded it.

The Czar, in thus forming himself new dominions, held out still an helping hand to King *Augustus*, who was losing his; he persuaded him by General *Patkul*, who had lately passed into the service of *Moscovy*, and was then the Czar's ambassador in *Saxony*, to come to *Grodno* to confer with him once more upon the unhappy state of his affairs. King *Augustus* came thither with some troops, attended by General *Shullembourg*, whose passage over the *Oder* had rendered him famous in the north, and in whom he placed his last hopes. The Czar arrived, with an hundred thousand men marching after him. The two monarchs formed new schemes of war. King *Augustus*, as he was dethroned, was no longer afraid of exasperating the *Poles* by giving up their country to the *Moscovite* troops. It was resolved that the Czar's army should be divided into several bodies to oppose every motion of the King of *Sweden*. During the time of this interview King *Augustus* instituted the order of the white eagle, a weak expedient to draw over to his interest certain *Polish* Lords, who were more desirous of real advantages than a mere nominal honour, which becomes ridiculous, when held of a Prince, who has nothing left of a King but the title. The conference of the two Kings ended in an extraordinary manner. The Czar departed suddenly, and left his troops to his ally, to go and extinguish a rebellion in person, which threatened him in *Astracan*. He was scarce gone from him, before King *Augustus* ordered *Patkul* to be taken up



## CHARLES XII. 101

*Dresden.* All *Europe* were in amaze that, contrary to the laws of nations, and in appearance to his own interest, he should venture to imprison the Ambassador of the only Prince who protected him.

The secret of the affair was thus, *Patkul*, proscribed in *Sweden* for having maintained the privileges of *Livonia* his country, had been General to King *Augustus*; but his high and active spirit, all agreeing with the haughty disposition of General *Fleming*, the King's favourite, more imperious and more active than himself, he had passed into the service of the Czar, whose General he then was, and Ambassador to *Augustus*. He was a man of great discernment, and had discovered that the views of *Fleming* and the Chancellor of *Saxony* were to offer peace to the King of *Sweden* at any rate. He formed immediately a design to prevent them, and to bring about an accommodation between the Czar and *Sweden*. The Chancellor countermined his project, and obtained leave to seize upon his person. King *Augustus* told the Czar that *Patkul* was a perfidious wretch and would betray them both. However he had no other fault, but that of having served his new master too well; but an unseasonable piece of service is often recompensed with the punishment of treason.

In the mean while the hundred thousand *Moscovites* on one side, divided into several small bodies, burnt and ravaged the estates of the adherents to *Stanislaus*; and *Shullembourg* on the other was advancing with his fresh troops. But the fortune of the *Swedes* dispersed these two armies in less than two months. *Charles XII.* and *Stanislaus*



*laus* fell upon the separate bodies of the *Moscovites* one after another ; but so briskly, that one *Moscovite* General was beaten before he knew of the defeat of his companion.

No obstacle could put a stop to the progress of the conqueror. If he found a river in his way betwixt him and the enemy, *Charles* and his *Swedes* would swim their horses over it. One party of *Swedes* took the baggage of *Augustus*, in which were two hundred thousand crowns of silver coin ; *Stanislaus* made a seizure of eight hundred thousand ducats belonging to prince *Menzikof* the General of the *Moscovites*. *Charles* at the head of his horse would often march thirty leagues in four and twenty hours, every soldier leading another horse in his hand to mount, when his own was weary. The *Moscovites*, terrified and reduced to a small number, fled in disorder beyond the *Boristhenes*.

Whilst *Charles* was thus driving the *Moscovites* before him into the heart of *Lithuania*, *Shullembourg* at last repassed the *Oder*, and came at the head of twenty thousand men to give battle to the grand Marechal *Renchild*, who was look'd upon as the best General *Charles XII.* had, and was called the *Parmenio* of the *Alexander* of the north. These two famous Generals, who seemed to share in the fate of their masters, met near *Punitz* in a place called *Fravenstad*, a territory already fatal to the troops of *Augustus*. *Renchild* had no more than thirteen battalions and two and twenty squadrons, which all together made about ten thousand men ; and *Shullembourg* had twice as many. It is to be observed, that he had in his army between six and seven thousand *Moscovites*, which



which had long been disciplined in *Saxony*, and were looked upon as experienced soldiers, who added the *German* discipline to the *Russian* fierceness. The battle of *Fravenstad* was fought on February 12, 1706. But this very General *Shulenburg*, who with four thousand men had in a manner eluded the fortune of the King of *Sweden*, took under that of General *Renchild*. The engagement lasted not a quarter of an hour, the *Saxons* did not resist a moment, and the *Moscovites* threw down their arms upon the first appearance of the *Swedes*; the terror was so sudden, and the disorder so great, that the conquerors found upon the field of battle seven thousand fusées discharged, which they had thrown away without using. No defeat was ever quicker, more complete and more shameful; and yet no General had ever made a finer disposition than *Shulenburg* that day by the confession of all the *Saxon* and *Swedish* officers, who learnt by the consequence how little human prudence is mistress of events.

Among the prisoners there was found an entire regiment of *Frenchmen*; these wretches had been taken prisoners by the troops of *Saxony* in 1704. At the famous battle of *Hocsted*, so fatal to the grandeur of *Lewis XIV.* They had since enlisted themselves into the service of King *Augustus*, who had formed them into a regiment of dragoons, and given the command of them to a *Frenchman*, of the family of *Joyeuse*. The colonel was killed upon the first, or rather the sole charge of the *Swedes*; and the entire regiment were made prisoners of war. From that day these *Frenchmen* desired that they might be allowed to serve *Charles XII.* and



XII. and were received into his service by a singular fate, which reserved them to change again their conqueror and master.

As to the *Moscovites*, they begged for life upon their knees; but *Renchild* ordered them to be humanly massacred in cold blood above six hours after the battle, to revenge on them the Depredations of their countrymen, and disencumber himself of a number of prisoners he knew not what to do with.

The King was upon his return from *Lithuania* when he received the news of this victory; but the satisfaction he received from it was disturbed by a small fit of jealousy, and he could not help saying, *Renchild will not compare himself with me again.*

*Augustus* now found himself without refuge, he had nothing left himself but *Cracow*, where he was shut up with two regiments of *Moscovites*, two of *Saxons*, and some troops of the army of the Crown, by whom he was even afraid he should be delivered up to the conqueror; but his misfortunes were completed, when they heard that *Charles XII.* had at last entered *Saxony* on September 1. 1706.

The Diete of *Ratisbone*, which represents the Empire, and whose resolutions are often as ineffectual as they are solemn, declared the King of *Sweden* an enemy to the Empire, in case he passed beyond the *Oder* with his army; which very determination confirmed him in his resolution of marching into *Germany*.

Upon his approach the villages were deserted and the inhabitants fled on all sides. *Charles* did here, as before at *Copenhagen*. He caused his

procla



tion to be fixed up in all places, that he had  
 other design but to procure peace; that all  
 se who returned to their houses, and paid the  
 tributions he should require, should be treated  
 his own subjects, and the rest pursued without  
 quarter. This declaration from a Prince, who was  
 ver known to have broken his word, brought  
 ck the inhabitants in numbers, whom fear had  
 ven away. He encamped at *Alranstad*, near  
 e plain of *Lutzen*, the field of battle famous for  
 e victory and death of *Gustavus Adolphus*. He  
 d a curiosity to see the place where that great  
 an fell; and when they had brought him upon  
 e spot, "I have endeavoured," says he, "to live  
 like him, it may be God may grant me one  
 day a death as glorious."

From this camp, he gave orders to the estates  
 of *Saxony* to meet, and send him without delay the  
 registers of the finances of the Electorate. As  
 on as he had them in his power, and was in-  
 formed exactly of what *Saxony* could supply, he  
 imposed a tax upon it of six hundred twenty five  
 thousand rixdollars a month. Besides which con-  
 tribution, the *Saxons* were obliged to furnish every  
*Swedish* soldier with two pound of meat, two pound  
 of bread, two pots of beer, and four pence a day,  
 with forage for the horse. The contributions  
 being thus regulated, the King established a new  
 method of guarding the *Saxons* from the insults of  
 his soldiers. He ordered in all the towns where  
 he put garrisons, that every inn-keeper, in whose  
 house the soldiers were quartered, should give  
 certificates of their behaviour every month, with-  
 out which the soldier, was not to have his pay.  
 Inspectors besides went every fifteen days from  
 house



house to house, to make enquiry whether the *Swedes* had occasioned any disturbance; and was taken to make the inn-keepers amends, and punish the persons in fault.

But though the troops of *Charles XII.* lived under so severe a discipline, that they plundered not the towns which were carried by assault, before they had leave; that they even plundered in a regular manner, and left off upon the first signal; and the *Swedes* to this day boast of the discipline they observed in *Saxony*; yet the *Saxons* complain of most terrible ravages committed by them; contradictions which it would be impossible to reconcile, if we did not consider that men are apt to look upon the same objects with different views. It can scarce be conceived but that the conquerors must at some times have transgressed the rules of moderation; and that the conqueror should censure the slightest damages, as the most shocking injuries. One day, as the King was riding out near *Lipsick*, a *Saxon* peasant threw himself at his feet to ask justice of him against a *granadier*, who had just taken from him what he had designed for his family's dinner. The King ordered the soldier to be brought before him. "And is it true," says he, "with a stern countenance, that you have robbed this man?" "Sir," says the soldier, "I have not done him so much mischief, as your Majesty has done his master: you have taken a Kingdom from him, and I have only taken a turkey from this fellow." The King gave the poor man ten ducats with his own hand, and pardoned the soldier for the boldness of his reply, saying, "Remember, friend, if I have taken a Kingdom from King *Augustus*"



thus, I have taken nothing for my self."

The great mart of *Lipsick* was held as usual; the tradesmen came thither in perfect security; not one *Swedish* foldier was seen in the fair; it was said the King of *Sweden's* army lay only in *Saxony* to keep the peace. He commanded throughout all the Electorate with as absolute a power and profound tranquillity as in *Stockholm*.

King *Augustus* wandering in *Poland*, and deprived at once both of his Kingdom and Electorate, at last wrote a letter with his own hand to *Charles XII.* to ask a peace. This letter he secretly sent by Baron *Inhof* and Mons. *Finsten*, Referendary of the Privy Council; he gave them full Powers and a Blank signed; Go, says he, endeavour to obtain for me reasonable and christian conditions. He was reduced to the necessity of concealing this overture for peace, and not to have recourse to the mediation of any Prince; for, being then in *Poland* at the mercy of the *Moscovites*, he had reason to fear that the dangerous ally, whom he abandoned, would revenge upon him his submission to the conqueror. His two plenipotentiaries came by night to *Charles XIIth's* camp, and had a private audience. The King read the letter, and, "Gentlemen, says he to the plenipotentiaries, "I will give you my answer in a moment." He immediately retired into his cabinet and wrote as follows:

Consent to give peace upon the following conditions, in which it must not be expected that I shall make the least alteration:

I. That King *Augustus* renounce for ever the crown of *Poland*; that he acknowledge *Stanislaus* as



as lawful King, and that he promise never remount the throne, not even after the death of Stanislaus.

II. That he renounce all other treaties, and particularly those he has made with Moscovy.

III. That he send back with honour into my camp the Princes Sobieski, and all the Prisoners he has been able to take.

IV. That he deliver into my hands all the deserters, who have entered into his service, and particularly John Patkul; and that all proceedings be stopped against such as have passed from his service into mine.

He gave this Paper to Count Piper, charging him to negotiate the rest with the Plenipotentiaries of King *Augustus*. They were shocked at the severity of the propositions; and used all the little art men can employ, where power is wanting to soften the rigour of the King of *Sweden*. They had several conferences with Count Piper, but could gain no other answer from him to all their persuasions, than "Such is the will of the King my master, and he never changes his resolutions."

Whilst this peace was silently negotiating in *Saxony*, fortune seemed to put King *Augustus* into a condition of obtaining one more honourable and of treating with his conqueror upon a more equal foot.

Prince *Menzicoff*, Generalissimo of the *Moscovite* army, brought him into *Poland* a body of thirty thousand men, at a time when he not only did not desire their assistance any longer, but even feared it. He had with him some *Polish* and *Saxon*



troops, which in all made up about six thousand men; surrounded with this small body by Prince *Menzicof's* army, he was under the most terrible apprehensions, in case they should discover his negotiation. He saw himself at the same time enthroned by his enemy, and in danger of being retained a prisoner by his ally. In this nice circumstance there appeared in view of the army one of the *Swedish* Generals, named *Maderfield*, at the head of ten thousand men at *Calish*, near the Palatinate of *Posnania*. Prince *Menzicof* pressed King *Augustus* to give them battle. The King in the utmost perplexities delayed it under several pretexts; for though the enemy had but one third number, there were four thousand *Swedes* in *Maderfield's* army, and that was enough to render the event doubtful; and to fall upon the *Swedes* during the negotiation, and lose the victory, was to ruin him past all redemption. He therefore determined to send a person upon whom he could rely to the General of the enemy, to let him into part of the secret of the peace, and advise him to retreat; but this advice had a very different effect from what was expected. General *Maderfield* imagined that a snare was laid to intimidate him, and upon the bare force of that imagination he resolved to risk the battle.

The *Moscovites* that day conquered the *Swedes* in a pitched battle for the first time. This victory, which King *Augustus* gained almost against his own inclination, was complete, and he entered triumphant in the midst of his bad fortune into *Warsaw*, formerly the capital of his Kingdom, but then a dismantled and ruined town, ready to receive any conqueror, and to acknowledge the  
F strongest



strongest for King. He was tempted to seize upon this moment for prosperity, and to fall upon the King of Sweden in Saxony with the *Moscovite* army. But upon recollection, that *Charles XII* was at the head of a *Swedish* army, which then had been invincible, that the *Moscovites* would forsake him upon the first information of the treaty he had begun; that *Saxony*, his hereditary dominions, already exhausted of men and money, would be equally ravaged by the *Moscovites* and *Swedes*; that the Empire taken up in war with *France* could not assist him; that he should be left without dominions, money, or friends; he judged it better to comply with the terms the King of Sweden should impose upon him. These terms were made more severe when *Charles* had information, that King *Augustus* had fallen upon his troops during the negotiation. His passion and the pleasure of humbling an enemy still more, who had gained an advantage over him, made him the more inflexible upon all the articles of the treaty. Thus the victory of King *Augustus* served only to render his situation the more unfortunate, a circumstance which in all probability never happened to any one but himself.

He had just sung *Te Deum* at *Warsaw*, when *Finsten*, one of his Plenipotentiaries, arrived from *Saxony*, with the treaty of peace, which deprived him of his crown. *Augustus* paused a while, but signed it, and then set out for *Saxony*, in vain hopes, that his presence might soften the King of Sweden, and that his enemy would perhaps call to mind the ancient alliances of their houses, and the blood which united them.

The



## CHARLES XII. 111

The two Princes had their first interview at *Müntersdorf* in Count *Piper's* quarters, without ceremony. *Charles XII.* was in jack-boots, with a piece of black taffety tied round his neck instead of a cravat; his clothes were as usual made of a coarse blue cloth, with brass buttons. He had a long sword by his side, which had served him in the battle of *Narva*, and upon the pomel of which he would often lean. The conversation turned wholly upon those great boots. *Charles XII.* told King *Augustus*, he had not laid them aside for six years, except when he went to sleep. These trifles were the sole discourse, that passed between two Kings, one of whom had dispossessed the other of a crown. *Augustus* spoke all the while with an air of com-aisance and satisfaction, which Princes and men accu- bituated to great affairs know how to assume amidst the most cruel mortifications. The two Kings dined together several times afterwards. *Charles* always affected to give the right hand to King *Augustus*; but was so far from softening the rigour of his demands, that he made them still harder. He obliged the King Elector, not only to send *Stanislaus* the jewels and records of the crown, but likewise to write him a letter of congratulation upon his accession. And he absolutely insisted upon the giving up of General *Patkul* without delay. *Augustus* therefore was forced to write the following letter, to his Rival.

SIR and BROTHER,

As I ought to have regard to the requests of the King of Sweden, I cannot avoid congratulating your Majesty upon your accession to the crown, though



*though perhaps the advantageous treaty the King of Sweden has lately concluded for your Majesty, might have excused me from this correspondence: However I congratulate your Majesty, beseeching God that your subjects may be more faithful to you, than they have been to me,*

Lipsick, Ap. 8.

AUGUSTUS, King

1707.

STANISLAUS answered,

SIR and BROTHER,

**T**HE correspondence of your Majesty is a new obligation which I owe to the King of Sweden. I have a just sense of the compliments you make me upon my coming to the crown; and hope my subjects will have no cause to fail in their fidelity to me; I shall observe the laws of the Kingdom.

STANISLAUS, King of POLAND

King Stanislaus came himself to Lipsick, where he one day met King Augustus; but the two Princes bowed to each other without speaking. This was the height of Charles XIIth's triumph to see two Kings in his Court, one of whom had been crowned, and the other dethroned by his arms.

Augustus was farther obliged to order all the magistrates under him not to treat him as King of Poland any longer, and to efface the title he renounced out of the publick prayers. He was



was concerned about setting the *Sobieski's* at liberty: though these Princes upon coming out of prison refused to see him; but the sacrifice of *Patkul* was a circumstance of great mortification. The Czar on one side loudly demanded him back of his Ambassador, and on the other the King of Sweden made terrible threats, if they refused to give him up to him. *Patkul* was then shut up in the castle of *Konisting* in *Saxony*. King *Augustus* thought he might find an expedient to satisfy *Charles XII.* and his own honour at the same time. He sent his guards to deliver up the unhappy prisoner to the *Swedish* troops; but sent before a secret order to the Governor of *Konisting* to let him escape. *Patkul's* ill fortune defeated the care that was taken to save him. The Governor knowing him to be very rich, would have had him bought his liberty. But the prisoner relying still upon the law of Nations, and informed of the intentions of King *Augustus*, refused to pay for what he thought he should obtain for nothing. During this interval, the guards appointed to seize upon him arrived, and immediately gave him up to four *Swedish* officers, who carried him strait to the general quarters at *Alranstad*, where he continued three months tied to a stake with a heavy chain of iron; and thence he was carried to *Carmir*. *Charles XII.* forgetting that *Patkul* was the Czar's Ambassador; and considering only that he was born his subject, ordered a council of war to pass sentence upon him with the utmost rigour. He was condemned to be broke alive and quartered. A chaplain came to let him know, that he was to die, without informing him of the manner of his punishment.



punishment. At the same instant this man, who had braved death in so many battles, finding himself alone with a priest, and his courage no longer supported by glory or passion, the sole source of human intrepidity, poured out a flood of tears into the chaplain's bosom. He was engaged to a *Saxon* lady named *Madam D'Einsiedel*, who had all the advantages of birth, merit and beauty, and whom he had thoughts of marrying much about the same time that he was given up to punishment. He desired the chaplain to visit her in order to offer her some consolation, and to assure her that he died full of the tenderest regards for her. When he was led to the place of punishment, and saw the wheels and stakes prepared for his execution, he fell into convulsions of terror, and threw himself into the arms of the Minister, who embraced him, and covered him with his cloak, and wept over him. A *Swedish* officer then read aloud a paper, which contained the following words.

"This is to declare, that the express order of his Majesty our most merciful Lord is, that this man, who is a traitor to his country, be broke upon the wheel and quartered, for the reparation of his crimes, and for an example to others; that every one may avoid treason, and faithfully serve his King." At these words most merciful Lord, *Patkul* cried out "What mercy?" And at those of traitor to his country; "Alas! says he, I have served it too well." He received sixteen blows, and endured the longest and most dreadful tortures, that can be imagined. Thus died the unfortunate *John Reinhold Patkul*, Ambassador and General to the Emperor of *Moscovy*.

Those



Those who looked upon him only as a subject, who had rebell'd against his King, said that he had deserved his death; but those who consider'd him as a *Livonian*, born in a province which had privileges to defend, and who recollected that he was driven from *Livonia* only for having supported those rights, called him the martyr to the liberty of his country. But all agreed that the title of Ambassador to the Czar ought to have rendered his person sacred. Only the King of *Sweden*, brought up in the principles of arbitrary power, thought that he had done no more than an act of justice, whilst all *Europe* condemned his cruelty.

His members were quartered, and remained exposed upon gibbets, till 1713. when *Augustus*, having regained his throne, ordered these testimonies of the necessity he was reduced to at *Altranstad* to be collected together. They were brought to him in a box to *Warsaw*, in presence of the *French* Ambassador. The King of *Poland* shewing the box to the Minister, only said to him, See the members of *Patkul*, without any addition of blame or complaint, or without any of the persons present venturing to speak upon so tender and so mournful a subject.

\* *Charles* would have proceeded with the same severity

\* I am at a loss to know from what Quarter Mr. *Valtaire* received Intelligence that *Charles* would have treated *Fleming*, as severely as he had punished *Patkul*. For it is very certain that his Majesty never intimated any such Intention. If he demanded *Fleming* to be delivered up to him, it was not because he had any prerogative over him, since *Fleming* was not born a Subject to him, but to the Elector of *Brandenburg*, whom his father served in the rank of a Chancellor of the regency of *Pomerania*, at *Stargard*, and in whose Dominions his Estate lay, but he had not any Effects in *Sweden*.



severity against General *Fleming*, the favourite and since the first Minister of King *Augustus*. *Fleming* was born in the *Swedish Pomerania*; and though from his infancy he had been attached to the Elector of *Saxony*, *Charles* looked upon him always as his subject, and had long demanded him to be given up to him. *Fleming*, when he saw his master not in a condition to refuse any thing, fled into *Prussia*, from whence he wrote a letter to King *Stanislaus*, with whom he had been acquainted in *Poland*, to beg of him, that he would prevail with the King of *Sweden* to lay aside his resentments against him. *Stanislaus* applied in his favour with warmth, and for eight days successively repeated his entreaties, without any effect; at last he almost threw himself at the feet of *Charles*, who said to him; "My brother, at your request I grant you his life, † but remember, you will one day repent of what you have done." And indeed *Fleming* did afterwards serve his master

*den*. If *Charles* therefore demanded *Fleming*, it was because he was apprehensive of his intriguing Genius, and his Attachments to *Poland*. I may add to this, that *Fleming* was not devoted, from his Infancy, to the service of the Elector of *Saxony*, but was a Captain several years in the Service of the Elector of *Brandenburg*.

Mr. *Voltaire's* Answer. What I have related with respect to this Affair was confirmed to me by a person, who had the same account from one of the two Kings. I am not permitted to publish his Name, but the Fact is well known to all the officers of King *Stanislaus*.

† Mr. *Voltaire* acquaints us that *Fleming* had retired to *Prussia*, and yet that *Charles* gave him his Life. *Charles* could not give him what it was out of his power to deprive him of, for *Fleming* was perfectly safe in *Prussia*.

Mr. *Voltaire's* Answer. I was assured of this Fact by the same person, and the circumstances of it are not chargeable with any contradiction or Inconsistency. For it was giving *Fleming* his Life, to permit him to return to the court of a Master who had sacrificed *Patkul*.

against



against *Stanislaus*, much beyond what his duty obliged him to.

About the same time one *Paikel*, a *Livonian*, and an officer in the *Saxon* troops, who was taken prisoner in the field, was condemned at *Stockholm* by a decree of the Senate; but his sentence was only to lose his head. This difference of punishments in the same case shewed too much, that *Charles*, in putting *Patkul* to so cruel a death, intended more to revenge himself than to punish him. However, *Paikel*, after his condemnation, proposed to the Senate, to let the King into the secret of making gold, in case he would pardon him. He made the experiment in prison in presence of Colonel *Hamilton* and the magistrates of the town; and, whether it was that he had in reality discovered any useful art, or whether he had found out none but that of deceiving plausibly, which seems most probable, they carried the gold which was found at the bottom of the crucible to the mint at *Stockholm*, and made a report so juridically, and which appeared so important, that the Queen, grandmother of *Charles*, ordered the execution to be suspended, till the King being informed of this particularity should send his orders to *Stockholm*.

The King made answer, "That he had refused the pardon of the criminal to the intreaties of his friends, and he never would grant that to interest, which he had denied to friendship." This inflexibility had something in it very heroic in a Prince, especially as he thought the secret possible. When it was told King *Augustus*, he said, He did not wonder that the King of *Sweden* had so much indifference for the philosophers stone,



stone, since he had found it in *Saxony*.

When the Czar had notice of the strange peace that King *Augustus*, notwithstanding their treaties, had concluded at *Alranstad*; and that *Patkul* his Ambassador and Plenipotentiary had been given up to the King of *Sweden* in contempt of the laws of nations, he spread his complaints through all the courts of *Europe*; he wrote to the Emperor of *Germany*, to the Queen of *England*, and to the States General of the united Provinces; he called the melancholy necessity, to which *Augustus* yielded, by the names of cowardice and treachery; he conjured all these powers to interpose their mediation for the sending back of his Ambassador, and to prevent the affront which in his person would be offered to all crowned heads; he pressed them by the motive of their honour not to descend so low as to become guarantees for the peace of *Alranstad*, which *Charles XII.* would force upon them by threatening. These letters had no other effect, than to shew the power of the King of *Sweden* still more. The Emperor, *England*, and *Holland*, were then engaged in a destructive war against *France*; and they did not judge it convenient to exasperate *Charles XII.* by the refusal of the vain ceremony of being guarantees to a treaty. As to the unfortunate *Patkul*, not one power interposed its good offices in his behalf; which shews how little a subject ought to rely on Princes.

It was proposed in the Czar's council to make retaliation by treating the *Swedish* officers, who were prisoners at *Moscow*, in the same manner. But the Czar would not consent to a barbarity, which would have been attended with such fatal

confe-



consequence; since there were more *Moscovites* prisoners in *Sweden*, than *Swedes* in *Moscow*.

He sought for a more advantageous revenge. The main body of his enemies army lay idle in *Saxony*. *Levenhaup*, the King of *Sweden*'s General, who was left in *Poland* with about twenty thousand men, was not able to guard the passes in a country without forts and full of factions. *Stanislaus* was in the camp of *Charles XII*. The Emperor of *Moscow* seizes upon this conjuncture, and re-enters *Poland* with above sixty thousand men; he divides them into several bodies, and marches with a flying camp as far as *Leopold* which was not garrison'd by the *Swedes*. All the towns of *Poland* are his, who appears before their gates at the head of an army. He caused an assembly to be called together at *Leopold*, not much unlike that, which had dethroned *Augustus* at *Warsaw*.

*Poland* had then two Primates, as well as two Kings, the one nominated by *Augustus*, the other by *Stanislaus*. The primate nominated by *Augustus* summoned the assembly of *Leopold*, and drew thither all those, whom this unfortunate Prince had abandoned by the peace of *Altranstad*, with such as the Czar's money had brought over to his interest, and it was proposed to elect a new King. So that *Poland* was upon the point of having three Kings at a time without being able to say which was the true one.

During the conferences of *Leopold*, the Czar, united in interests with the Emperor of *Germany* through the common fear they had of the King of *Sweden*, secretly obtained of him a number of *German Officers*. These came daily to make a considerable augmentation in his forces, by bring-



ing with them experience and discipline. He engaged them to his service by great rewards; and for the better encouragement of his own troops, he gave his picture set round with diamonds to all the general Officers and Colonels, who had fought at the battle of *Calish*; the lower Officers had medals of gold, and every private soldier a medal of silver. These monuments of the victory at *Calish* were all struck in his new City of *Petersburg*, where arts and sciences flourished in proportion as he trained up his troops to a sense of emulation and glory.

The confusion, multiplicity of factions, and continual ravages prevailing in *Poland*, hindered the Diete of *Leopold* from coming to any resolution, for which reason, the Czar transferred it to *Lublin*. But the change of place did not lessen the disorders and uncertainty, which all mankind were in; and the assembly satisfied themselves with neither owning *Augustus*, who had abdicated, nor *Stanislaus*, who had been elected against their inclinations; but they were neither sufficiently united, nor resolute enough to name another King. During these fruitless deliberations, the party of the Princes *Sapieha*, that of *Oginsky*, those who held in secret for King *Augustus*, and the new subjects of *Stanislaus*, all made war upon one another, ravaged each others estates, and finished the ruin of their country. The *Swedish* troops commanded by *Levenhaup*, of which one part lay in *Livonia*, another in *Lithuania*, and a third in *Poland*, were daily in pursuit of the *Moscovite* troops, and set fire to every thing that opposed *Stanislaus*. The *Moscovites* equally ruined friends and enemies, and nothing was to be seen but towns in ashes, and wandering



wandering troops of *Poles*, deprived of all their substance, who equally hated their two Kings, and *Charles XII.* and the Czar.

King *Stanislaus* set out from *Alranstad* on the 15th of *July* 1707, with General *Rencbild*, sixteen *Swedish* regiments, and great sums of money, to appease all these troubles in *Poland*, and make himself peaceably owned. He was acknowledged wherever he passed; the discipline of his troops, which the better exposed the barbarity of the *Moscovites*, gained him the people's inclinations; his extreme affability re-united to him almost all the factions, in proportion as it was known; and his money procured him the greatest part of the army of the crown. The Czar fearing he should want provisions in a country, which his troops had laid desolate, retired into *Lithuania*, where he had appointed the rendezvous of the several branches of his army, and established magazines. This retreat left King *Stanislaus* in the peaceable possession of almost all *Poland*.

The only one, who then troubled him in his dominions, was Count *Siniausky*, Grand General of the crown, of the nomination of *Augustus*. He was a person of very great abilities, and as much ambition, and was at the head of a third party. He neither owned *Augustus* nor *Stanislaus*, and after having used his utmost efforts to make himself elected, he was contented to be head of a party, as he could not be King. The troops of the crown, who continued under his command, had scarce any other pay, besides the liberty of ravaging their own country with impunity. And all who had suffered from their plunder,

or



or were apprehensive of it, presently submitted to *Stanislaus*, whose power was daily confirmed.

The King of *Sweden* was then receiving Ambassadors in his camp at *Alranstad*, from almost all the Princes in *Christendom*. Some desired him to quit the dominions of the Empire, and others pressed him to turn his arms against the Emperor; and it was then a current report, that he designed to join with *France*, in depressing the house of *Austria*. Amongst these Ambassadors was the famous *John Duke of Marlborough*, sent by *Anne Queen of Great-Britain*. This man who never laid siege to a town which he did not take, nor fought a battle which he did not gain, was at *St. James's* a perfect courtier, the head of a party in Parliament, and in foreign countries the most able negotiator of his time. He did *France* as much mischief by his understanding, as by his arms. And *Fagel*, Secretary of the States-General, a man of very great merit, has been heard to say, that more than once the States-General having resolved to oppose what the Duke of *Marlborough* was to lay before them; the Duke came, spoke to them in *French*, in which language he expressed himself very ill \*, and brought them all into his sentiments.

In conjunction with Prince *Eugene*, the companion of his victories, and *Heinsius* the Grand Pensioner of *Holland*, he supported all the weight

\* The Duke's pronounciation inclined a little to the English Accent, but he was a great Proficient in the French Language and spoke it very fluently.

Mr. *Voltaire's* Answer. I received this Information from Lord *Bolingbrook*, who in all probability was better acquainted with the Duke of *Marlborough*, than the Remarker.



of the enterprizes of the allies against *France*. He knew that *Charles* was exasperated against the Emperor and the Emperor; that he was secretly solicited by the *French*; and that if this conqueror should join himself to *Lewis XIV.* the allies would be undone.

'Tis true, *Charles* had given his word in 1700. not to intermeddle in the war of *Lewis XIV.* with the allies. But the Duke of *Marlborough* did not believe that any Prince would be so great a slave to his word, as not to sacrifice it to his grandeur and interest. He therefore set out from the *Hague* with a design to sound the intentions of the King of *Sweden*.

As soon as he was arrived at *Lipsick*, where *Charles* then was, he applied himself secretly, not to Count *Piper* the first Minister, but to Baron *Goerts*\*, who began to share the King's confidence with *Piper*. He told *Goerts*, that the design of the allies was very shortly to propose to the King of *Sweden* to be a second time mediator between them and *France*. He said this in hopes of discovering by *Goerts*'s answer the King's intentions, and because he chose much rather to have *Charles* for an arbitrator than an enemy. At last he had his publick audience at *Lipsick*.

Upon his first address to the King, he told him in *French* that he should think himself happy, if

\* The Duke could not possibly address himself to Baron *Goerts*, who at that Time was not a Baron, but Grand Marshal to the Bishop of *Lubeck*, Administrator of the Dutchy of *Holstein*, and he must certainly be very little known then to *Charles*.

Mr. *Voltaire*'s Answer. I was assured of this Fact by Mr. *Fabricius* who was then present, and who gave me this Information before several Witnesses.



he could be taught under his command, what he yet wanted to know in the art of war. He then had a private audience of an hour long, in which the King spoke in *German*, and the Duke in *French* \* the Duke who was never in haste to make propositions, and had learnt by a long course of experience the art of penetrating into the sentiments of mankind, and finding out the secret connexion between their inmost thoughts and their actions, gestures, and discourse, fixed his eyes attentively upon the King. When he spoke to him of war in general, he thought he perceived in his Majesty a natural aversion towards *France*, and observed that he was pleased when he talked of the conquests of the allies. He mentioned the Czar to him, and took notice that his eyes always kindled at his name, notwithstanding the moderation of the conference; and he farther remarked, that a map of *Moscow* lay before him upon the table. He wanted no more to determine him in his judgment, that the real design of the King of *Sweden* and his sole ambition were to dethrone the Czar, as he had already done the King of *Poland*. He understood that he had no other views by continuing in *Saxony*, than to impose by that means certain hard laws upon the Emperor of *Germany*. But he knew that the Emperor would comply with them, and that thus matters would be easily made up. He left *Charles XII.* to his natural inclination; and being satisfied with having discovered his intentions, he made him no kind of proposal.

\* The Duke certainly did not understand a Word of High-Dutch.

Mr. *Voltaire's* Answer. His Grace understood, but did not speak it.

As



As few negotiations are concluded without money, and Ministers are sometimes seen to sell the interest or favours of their masters, 'tis believed throughout all *Europe*, that the Duke of *Marlborough's* success with the King of *Sweden* was obtained by a large sum of money, opportunely given to Count *Piper*, and the Count is reflected upon for it to this day. For my own part, after having traced this report to its source, I have been informed that *Piper* received a small present from the Emperor by the hands of Count *Wratislaw*, with the consent of the King his master, and nothing from the Duke of *Marlborough*. And farther, Count *Piper*, who was sensible that the proceedings of his King might one day be imputed to him, if they proved unfortunate; sent his advice sealed up to the Senate of *Sweden*; to be opened after his death. His opinion was, that *Charles* should first firmly establish King *Stanislaus* upon the crown of *Poland*, and then accept of the mediation between *France* and the allies, before he went to engage himself in *Moscovy*. 'Tis true indeed, that *Piper* might at the same time advise his master to that dangerous expedition, and be willing to clear himself of it in the eyes of posterity; but it is as certain that *Charles* was obstinately bent upon dethroning the Emperor of *Russia*, that he then took counsel of no body, nor had any occasion for Count *Piper's* instigations to stir him up to revenge against *Peter Alexi-witz*, which he had so long thirsted after. And lastly, what absolutely vindicates the Minister from this imputation, is the honour which *Charles XII.* paid to his memory a long time after; when having learnt that *Piper* was dead in *Russia*, he caused



caused his body to be transported to *Stockholm*, and buried with great pomp and magnificence at his own expence.

The King, who had not as yet experienced fortune, or even any interruption of his successes, thought that one year would be sufficient for de-throning the Czar, and that then he might return and raise himself by his own power to the dignity of arbiter of *Europe*; but he had a mind first to bring down the spirit of the Emperor of *Germany*.

Count *Zobor*, the Emperor's Chamberlain, had spoke very disrespectfully \* of the King of *Sweden*, in the presence of the *Swedish* Ambassador at *Vienna*. The Emperor had made Reparation though much against his will, by banishing the Count. But this would not satisfy the King of *Sweden*; he insisted upon the delivery of Count *Zobor* into his hands. The pride of the court of *Vienna* was obliged to stoop, and give up the Count to the King, who sent him back after having kept him some time a prisoner at *Stettin*.

He farther demanded, in opposition to all the laws of Nations, that they should deliver up to him fifteen hundred unfortunate *Moscovites*, who having escaped his arms had fled into the Emperor's dominions. And the court of *Vienna* must have consented to this extravagant demand, and they all had been given up to the enemy, if the

\* Count *Zobor* not only spoke disrespectfully of the King of *Sweden*, but likewise struck Baron *Strallenheim*, the *Swedish* Ambassador at *Vienna*.

*Voltaire's* Answer. This Circumstance is far from being a Secret but there are things which ought sometimes to be suppressed.

*Supprimis Orator, quia rusticus edit inepte.*



Russian envoy at Vienna had not artfully provided for their escape, by different roads.

The third and last of his demands was the most considerable. He declared himself Protector of the Emperor's protestant subjects in *Silesia*, a province belonging to the House of *Austria*, and not to the Empire. And it was his will, that the Emperor should grant them the liberties and privileges, which had been established by the treaties of *Westphalia*, but were extinguished, or at least eluded, by those of *Ryswick*. The Emperor, who wanted nothing so much as to get rid of so dangerous a neighbour, still complied, and granted him all that he desired. The *Lutherans* had above an hundred churches in *Silesia*, which the *Roman-catholicks* were obliged to give up to them by this treaty; but many of these concessions, which the King of *Sweden*'s fortune procured to them, were taken from them as soon as ever he was out of a condition to impose laws.

The Emperor, who was forced to make these concessions and absolutely complied with the will of *Charles XII.* was named *Joseph*, the eldest son of *Leopold*, and brother to the wife Emperor *Charles VI.* who succeeded him. The Pope's Nuncio, who then resided in his court, reproached him very severely, that he, who was a *Roman-catholick*, should thus give up the interest of his own religion, in favour of hereticks. " 'Tis well for you," answered the Emperor smiling, " that the King of *Sweden* did not propose to make me a *Lutheran*; for, if he had, I don't know what I should have done."

Count *Wratislau*, his Ambaffador with *Charles XII.* brought the treaty to *Lipsick* in favour of the



the *Silesians*, signed by his master's own hand. *Charles* then said, he was satisfied, and was the Emperor's very good friend. However, he was much disgusted at the opposition he had found from *Rome* upon every occasion. He looked with the utmost contempt upon the weakness of that court, which having one half of *Europe* for its irreconcilable enemy, is always in distrust of the other, and supports its credit only by its skill in negotiations. In the mean time he meditated revenge. He told Count *Wratislau*, that the *Swedes* had formerly conquered *Rome*, and had not degenerated like that City. And he let the Pope know, that he would one day demand back the effects which *Queen Christina* had left at *Rome*. One cannot tell, how far this young conqueror would have carried his resentments and his arms, if fortune had prospered his designs. Nothing then appeared impossible to him. He had even sent privately several officers into *Asia*, and as far as *Aegypt*, to take the plan of the towns, and inform him of the strength of those countries. 'Tis certain that if any one could have overturned the Empire of the *Persians* and *Turks*, and then have passed into *Italy*, it was *Charles XII*. He was as young as *Alexander*, as much a soldier, and as enterprizing; but more indefatigable, more robust, and more virtuous; and the *Swedes* perhaps exceeded the *Macedonians*: But such projects, which are looked upon as divine, when attended with success, are treated as chimæra's, when they want it.

At last, all difficulties being removed, and whatever he had a mind to executed; after having humbled the Emperor, given laws in the Empire, protected



protected the *Lutheran* religion in the midst of *Roman-catholicks*, dethroned one King, crowned another, and seen himself the terror of all the princes around him, he prepared for his departure. The pleasures of *Saxony*, where he had lain idle full year, had made no alteration in his manner of living. He mounted on horseback three times a day, rose at four in the morning, dressed himself alone, drank no wine, sat at table but one quarter of an hour, exercised his troops every day, and knew no other pleasure, but that of making *Europe* tremble.

The *Swedes* did not yet know, whither their King would lead them; only it was suspected in the army, that he might go to *Moscow*. Some days before his departure, he ordered the Grand Mareschal of his household to give him in writing the rout from *Lipsick*. . . . He paused a while at that word, and that the Mareschal might have no suspicion of his projects, he added smiling, . . . to all the capital cities of *Europe*. The Mareschal brought him a list of them all, and at the head of them had affected to put in great letters, *The road from Lipsick to Stockholm*. The generality of the *Swedes* wished only to return thither, but the King was far from the thought of carrying them back into their own country. "I see, Sir," says he, "whither you would lead me, but we shall not return to *Stockholm* so soon."

The army was already upon their march, and passed near *Dresden*. *Charles* was at their head, and riding according to his custom about a quarter or half a mile before his guards. They lost sight of him all at once, and some of the officers spurred on their horses to see where he was; but



but with all their enquiry they could not find him. The whole army took the alarm in a moment. They made a halt, and the Generals met together; and whilst they were in great consternation they learnt at last from a *Saxon*, who was passing by, what was become of him.

He had a mind, as he passed so near *Dresden* to make a visit to King *Augustus*. He entered the town on horseback, attended by three or four general officers, and went directly to alight at the palace. He was got as far as the Elector's apartment, before it was known that he was in the town. General *Fleming* having seen the King of *Sweden* at a distance, had only time to run and inform his master. All that could be done upon such an occasion, was presented to the idea of the Minister, who laid it before *Augustus*; but *Charles* entered the chamber in his boots, before *Augustus* had time to recover from his surprize. He was then sick and in a night-gown, but dressed himself presently. *Charles* breakfasted with him as a traveller, who came to take leave of his friend, and then he expressed his desire of viewing the fortifications. During the little time that was taken up in walking round them, a *Livonian* condemned in *Sweden*, who served in the troops of *Saxony*, thought he could never have a more favourable opportunity of obtaining pardon, and begged of King *Augustus* to ask it of *Charles*; being fully assured that his Majesty could not refuse so slight a request to a Prince, from whom he had taken a crown, and in whose power he then was. *Augustus* was easily prevailed upon to undertake it. He stood at a little distance from the King of *Sweden*, and was discoursing with *Hoord* a *Swedish*



General. "I believe," says he smiling, "that your master will not refuse me." "You don't know him," replies General *Hoord*, "he will rather refuse you here than any where else." *Augustus* notwithstanding asked a pardon for the *Lithuanian* of the King in pressing terms; and *Charles* denied him in such a manner, that he did not think fit to ask it a second time. After having passed some hours in this odd kind of visit, he embraced King *Augustus*, and took his leave. Upon returning to his army he found all his Generals assembled in a council of war, and asked the reason. General *Renchild* told him, they had determined to besiege *Dresden*, in case his Majesty had been detained a prisoner. "Right," says the King, "they durst not, they durst not." The next morning, upon the news that King *Augustus* held an extraordinary council at *Dresden*: "You see," says *Renchild*, "they are deliberating upon what they should have done yesterday." A few days after this Event *Renchild* coming to wait upon the King spoke to him with astonishment of his Adventure at *Dresden*. I confided in my good fortune, said *Charles*, but I have once seen the Moment that might have been a little unfavourable to me. *Fleming* had so great Inclination that I should leave *Dresden* so soon.

*The End of the Third Book.*

T H E



THE  
HISTORY  
OF  
CHARLES XII

KING of SWEDEN.

BOOK IV.

The CONTENTS.

*Charles leaves Saxony; pursues the Czar; advances far into Ukrania; his losses, wounds and the battle of Pultowa; the consequence of that battle; Charles reduced to a necessity of flying into Turkey, his reception in Bessarabia*

**C**HARLES at last took leave of Saxony in September 1707, followed by an army of three and forty thousand men, formerly covered with steel, but then shining with gold and silver, and enriched with the spoils of Poland and Saxony. Every soldier carried with him fifty crowns in ready money; all the regiments were not only complete, but in every company there were several supernumeraries, who waited



or vacant places. Besides this army, Count *Levenhaup*, one of his best Generals, waited for him in *Poland* with twenty thousand men; and he had besides another army of fifteen thousand in *Finland*; and fresh recruits were coming to him from *Sweden*. With all these forces it was not doubted but he must dethrone the Czar.

The Emperor of *Moscovy* was then in *Lithuania*, employed in keeping up the spirits of a party, which King *Augustus* seemed to have renounced. His troops, divided into several bodies, fled on all sides upon the first report of the King of *Sweden*'s approach. He had himself advised all his Generals never to wait for the coming up of his conqueror with unequal force.

The King of *Sweden* in the midst of his victorious march received a solemn embassy from the *Turks*. The Ambassador had his audience in Count *Piper*'s quarters; for 'twas there always that ceremonies of pomp were performed. He supported the dignity of his master by a magnificent appearance; and the King, who was always worse lodged, worse served, and more plainly clad than the meanest officer in his army, would often say that his palace was *Piper*'s quarters. The *Turkish* Ambassador presented *Charles* with an hundred *Swedish* soldiers; who having been taken by the *Calmouks*, sold in *Turkey*, and redeemed by the grand Signior, were sent by him to the King as the most agreeable present he could make him; not that the *Ottoman* pride pretended to pay homage to the glory of *Charles XII.* but because the Sultan, a natural enemy to the Emperors of *Moscovy* and *Germany*, was desirous of strengthening himself against them by the friendship of  

G *Sweden,*



*Sweden*, and the alliance of *Poland*. The Ambassador complimented *Stanislaus* upon his advancement to the crown; and thus he was owned as King in a very little time by *Germany*, *France*, *England*, *Spain*, and *Turkey*. There remained only the Pope, who before he acknowledged him was willing to wait, till time had settled the crown upon his head, which a turn of fortune might strike off.

*Charles* had scarce given audience to the Ambassador of the *Ottoman Porte*, before he began his march in search of the *Moscovites*.

The Czar had left *Poland*, and returned thither above twenty times during the course of the war. The country lying open on all sides, and having no strong holds to cut off the retreat of an army, left the *Moscovites* the liberty of appearing often again in the very place where they had been beaten; and even allowed them to penetrate as far into the country as the conqueror. Whilst *Charles* was in *Saxony*, the Czar had advanced as far as *Leopold*, which lyes on the southern extremity of *Poland*. He was then towards the north at *Grodno* in *Lithuania* about a hundred leagues from *Leopold*.

*Charles* left *Stanislaus* in *Poland* with ten thousand *Swedes* and his new subjects to assist him in the preservation of his Kingdom, against his foreign and domestick enemies; as for his own part, he marched at the head of his horse amidst ice and snow towards *Grodno* in the month of *January*, 1708.

He had already passed the *Niemen* within two leagues of the town, before the Czar knew any thing of his march. Upon the first news that



the *Swedes* were coming, the Czar leaves the town by the north-gate, and *Charles* enters by the south. The King had with him but six hundred of his guards, the rest not being able to follow him; and the Czar fled with above two thousand men, upon supposition that a whole army was entering into *Grodno*; but he learnt that very day from a *Polish* deserter, that he had quitted the place to no more than six hundred men, and that the body of the enemy's army was still above five leagues distant. He lost no time, but sent a detachment of fifteen hundred horse in the evening to surprise the King of *Sweden* in the town. The fifteen hundred *Moscovites*, assisted by the darkness of the night, advanced as far as the first *Swedish* guard without being known. This guard consisted of thirty men; and they alone sustained the attack of fifteen hundred for half a quarter of an hour. The King who lay at the other end of the town came up presently with his six hundred guards; and the *Moscovites* fled with precipitation. His army were not long without joining him, nor he without pursuing the enemy. All the *Moscovite* troops who were dispersed in *Lithuania* retired in haste eastward into the Palatinate of *Minsky*, near the frontiers of *Moscow*, where their rendezvous was appointed. The *Swedes*, whom the King also divided into several bodies, did not cease to pursue them for above thirty leagues of their way. Those who fled and those who pursued, made excessive marches almost every day, though in the midst of winter. All seasons had been long equal to the soldiers of *Charles* and of the Czar; the sole terror, which the name of *Charles* carried



carried with it, then made the difference between the *Moscovites* and the *Swedes*.

From *Grodno* to the *Boristhenes* eastward lye nothing but morasses, deserts, mountains, and immense forests ; in such places as are cultivated there was no provision to be found ; the country people buried all their grain under ground, and whatever else could be preserved there. In order to discover these subterraneous magazines, they were obliged to sound the earth with long poles pointed with iron. The *Moscovites* and *Swedes* served themselves with these provisions by turns ; but they were not always found, nor did they prove sufficient, when they were discovered.

The King of *Sweden*, who had foreseen these difficulties, had provided biscuit for the subsistence of his army, so that nothing stop'd him in his march. After he had crossed the forest of *Minsky* where his men were obliged every moment to cut down trees to make way for his troops and baggage, he found himself on the 25th of *June*, 1708. before the river *Berezine*, over against *Borislow*.

The Czar had got together the best part of his troops in that place and intrenched himself to advantage. His design was to hinder the *Swedes* from passing the river. *Charles* posted some of his regiments on the banks of the *Berezine*, directly against *Borislow*, as though he meant to attempt the passage in sight of the enemy. At the same time he leads his army about three leagues up the river, throws a bridge over it, cuts his way through a body of three thousand men, who defended that post, and marches to the enemy without stopping. The *Moscovites* did not

wait



wait however for his coming up, but immediately decamped, and retreated towards the *Boristhenes*, spoiling all the roads, and spreading destruction wherever they passed, that by these means at least they might retard the progress of the *Swedes*.

*Charles* surmounted all difficulties, advancing still towards the *Boristhenes*. He met with twenty thousand *Moscovites* in his way intrenched in a place named *Hollofin*, behind a morass, which could not be come at without passing a river. *Charles* did not wait for the assault till the rest of his infantry came up, but threw himself into the water at the head of his foot-guards, and crossed the river and the morass, with the water sometimes above his shoulders. Whilst he thus marched against the enemy, he ordered his horse to pass round the morass, and fall upon them in flank. The *Moscovites* in amaze, that no barrier could defend them, were at the same time routed by the King on foot, and by the *Swedish* horse.

The horse having made their way through the enemy, joined the King in the midst of the battle. He then mounted on horseback, but some time after finding a young *Swedish* gentleman, named *Gullenstiern*, whom he very much esteemed, wounded in the field, and unable to march, he obliged him to take his horse, and continued to command on foot at the head of his infantry. Of all the battles he had ever fought, this in all probability was the most glorious, that wherein he was exposed to the most dangers, and where he shewed the greatest abilities. The memory of it is preserved by a medal, with this inscription on one side, SYLVÆ, PALUDES, AGGERES,



HOSTES VICTI; and on the other, VICTRICES  
COPIAS ALIUM LATURUS IN ORBEM.

The *Moscovites*, thus obliged to fly, repassed the *Boristhenes*, which separates the dominions of *Poland* from their own country. *Charles* lost no time in the pursuit, he crossed that great river after them at *Mobilou*, the last town in *Poland*, which sometimes belongs to the Czar, and sometimes to the *Poles*, according to the common fate of frontier places.

The Czar, thus seeing his Empire, in which he was giving birth to arts and trade, become a prey to a war, which in a little time might ruin all his projects, and perhaps take him from his throne, was inclined to a peace, and even ventured some proposals by a *Polish* gentleman, whom he sent to the *Swedish* army. *Charles XII.* who had not been used to grant peace to his enemies, but in their capital cities, only answered, *I will treat with the Czar at Moscow.* When this haughty answer was reported to the Czar, "My brother *Charles*," says he, "still affects to act the *Alexander*, but I flatter myself he will not find a *Darius* in me."

About thirty leagues northward from *Mobilou*, the place where the King passed the *Boristhenes*, along the river, and still upon the frontiers of *Poland* and *Moscow*, is situate the country of *Smolensko*, in which lyes the great road from *Poland* to *Moscow*. This way the Czar retreated, and the King followed by long marches; and so close, that part of the rear-guard of the *Moscovites* was frequently engaged with the dragoons of the *Swedish* van-guard. The latter had generally the advantage; but they weakened themselves even by conquering



conquering in these small skirmishes, which were never decisive, and in which they always lost abundance of men.

On the 22d of *September*, in this year 1708. the King attacked a body of ten thousand horse and six thousand *Calmouks* near *Smolensko*. These *Calmouks* are *Tartars*, living between the Kingdom of *Astracan*, which is part of the Czar's dominions, and that of *Sarmarcande*, belonging to the *Usbeck Tartars*, and the country of *Timur*, which is known by the name of *Tamerlane*. The country of the *Calmouks* extends eastward to the mountains, which separate the *Mogul* from the western part of *Asia*. Those who inhabit near *Astracan* are tributary to the Czar; he pretends to an absolute dominion over them, but their wandring way of life hinders him from enjoying it, and obliges him to deal with them, as the Grand Signior with the *Arabs*, sometimes bearing with their robberies, and at other times punishing them. There are always some of these *Calmouks* in the troops of *Moscovy*, and the Czar had reduced even them to discipline, like the rest of his soldiers.

The King fell upon this army with only six regiments of horse, and four thousand foot; broke their ranks upon the first onset at the head of his *Ostrogothick* regiment, and forced the enemy to retreat. He advanced upon them through rough and hollow ways, where the *Calmouks* lay hid; they then appeared again, and threw themselves between the regiment where the King was fighting and the rest of the *Swedish* army. The *Moscovites* and *Calmouks* in an instant surrounded this regiment, and made their way quite up to his Majesty.



Majesty. They killed two *Aides de Camp*, who fought near his Person. The King's horse was slain under him; and as one of his equeries was presenting him another, both the equery and horse were struck dead upon the spot. *Charles* fought on foot, encircled by some of his officers, who immediately flew to relieve him by surrounding him.

Several of them were taken, wounded or slain, or carried off to a distance from the King by the multitude that fell upon them, so that only five men were left about him. He was quite spent with fatigue, having killed above a dozen of the enemy with his own hand, without receiving so much as one wound, by that inexpressible good fortune, which till then had ever attended him, and upon which he still relied. At last Colonel *Dardoff* forced his way through the *Calmouks* with a single company of his regiment, and came time enough to disengage the King. The rest of the *Swedes* put the *Tartars* to the sword. The army recovered its ranks, *Charles* mounted his horse, and, fatigued as he was, pursued the *Moscovites* two leagues.

The conqueror was still in the great road to the capital of *Moscovy*. From *Smolensko*, near which this battle was fought, to *Moscow*, are about a hundred *French* leagues; and the roads in themselves not worse than those, through which the *Swedes* had already passed; but they had information, that the Czar had not only made all these roads impassable, either by laying such parts of them under water, as lay near the marshes, or by digging very deep ditches at certain distances, or by covering the way with the wood of whole forests



forests which his soldiers had cut down; but also they learn'd, that he had set fire to all the villages, both on the right side, and the left. The winter was coming on, and there was little appearance of making any speedy advances into the country, and none of subsisting there; and the whole body of the *Moscovite* forces might unexpectedly fall upon the King of *Sweden* through by-ways, which he was not acquainted with.

*Charles* having made a review of his whole army, and taken an account of their provisions, found that he had not a sufficient quantity to subsist them for fifteen days. General *Levenhaup*, who was appointed to bring him a supply with a reinforcement of fifteen thousand men, was not yet come up; he therefore resolved to quit the road to *Moscow*, and turn to the south towards *Ukrania*, into the country of the *Cosaques*, situate between the lesser *Tartary*, *Poland* and *Moscovy*. This country extends about a hundred *French* leagues from the south to the north, and almost as many from the east to the west. 'Tis divided into two parts, which are very near equal, by the *Boristhenes*, which runs across from the north-west to the south east: and the principal town is *Bathurin* upon the little river *Sem*. The most northern part of *Ukrania* is cultivated and rich; the most southern situate in the 48<sup>th</sup> degree, is one of the most fertile countries in the world, and the most desolate; the calamitous Government still suppressing all the efforts of bounteous nature to make the inhabitants happy. The People of those cantons that lye near the lesser *Tartary* neither plant nor sow, lest the *Tartars* of *Bougiac*, *Precop*, and *Moldavia*, who subsist by robbery, should carry off their harvests.



*Ukrania* has always aspired to be free ; but being surrounded by *Moscow*, the dominions of the Grand Signior, and *Poland*, it has ever been obliged to seek for a protector, and consequently a master, in one of those three States. 'Twas first put under the protection of *Poland*, which carried it over them with too high a hand ; they then applied to the *Moscovite*, who governed them as slaves, as much as possible. The *Ukranians* had the privilege at first of chusing a Prince under the name of General, but they were soon after deprived of this right, and their General was nominated by the Court of *Moscow*.

That station was then filled by a *Polish* gentleman, named *Mazeppa*, born in the Palatinate of *Podolia*. He had been brought up a page to King *John Casimir*, and had received some tincture of polite learning in his court. An intrigue he had in his youth with the lady of a *Polish* gentleman being discovered, the husband caused him to be whipt, and then tied naked upon a wild horse, and sent to ramble in that condition. The horse, which had been brought out of *Ukrania* returned into his own country, and carried *Mazeppa* with him half killed with hunger and fatigue. Some of the country people gave him relief, he lived a long time among them, and signalized himself in several excursions against the *Tartars*. The superiority of his understanding made him very considerable among the *Cosaques*, and his reputation daily encreasing obliged the Czar to make him Prince of *Ukrania*.

One day as he sat at table with the Czar at *Moscow*, the Emperor proposed to him to discipline the *Cosaques*, and render those people more dependent.



dependent. *Mazeppa* answered that the situation of *Ukrania*, and the genius of the Nation, were obstacles not to be surmounted. The Czar, who was somewhat over heated with wine, and did not always command his passion, called him traitor, and threatned to have him empaled.

*Mazeppa*, upon his return into *Ukrania*, laid the scheme of a revolt. The *Swedish* army, which appeared soon after upon the frontiers, opened him an easy way to it; and he took a resolution of becoming independent, and raising himself a powerful Kingdom out of *Ukrania*, and the ruins of the *Russian* Empire. He was a person of great courage, of an enterprising genius, and indefatigable labour; he entered into a secret league with the King of *Sweden* to hasten the downfall of the Czar, and make his own advantage of it.

The King appointed the rendezvous near the river *Desna*. *Mazeppa* promised to meet him there with thirty thousand men, proper ammunition and provisions, and all his treasures, which were immense. The *Swedish* army therefore was ordered to march towards that side of the country to the great astonishment of all the officers, who knew nothing of the King's treaty with the *Cosaques*. *Charles* sent orders to *Levenhaupt* to bring up his troops and provisions with all speed into *Ukrania*, where he designed to pass the winter, that having secured that country to himself, he might conquer *Moscovy* the next spring; and in the mean time he advanced towards the river *Desna*, which falls into the *Boristhenes* at *Kiou*.



The obstacles they had hitherto encountered in their march were trifles to those they met with in this new road. They were obliged to cross a forest full fifty leagues broad, and full of marshes. General *Lagercron*, who marched before with five thousand men and pioneers, led the army thirty leagues eastward out of the right way. And they had marched four days, before the King discovered the mistake. With difficulty they struck into the right road again, but left almost all their artillery and waggons behind, which were either stuck fast, or quite sunk in the mud.

They marched for twelve days in this painful and laborious manner, till they had eaten up the little biscuit that was left, and then they arrived quite spent with hunger and fatigue upon the banks of the *Desna*, in the place where *Mazeppa* had appointed to meet them; but instead of the Prince, they found a body of *Moscovites* advancing towards the other side of the river. The King was very much astonished, but resolved immediately to pass the *Desna*, and attack the enemy. The banks of the river were so steep, that they were obliged to let the soldiers down with cords; and they crossed it according to their usual manner, some by swimming, and others on floats hastily made. The body of *Moscovites*, which arrived at the same time, were not above eight thousand men; so that they made but small resistance, and this obstacle was also surmounted.

*Charles* advanced farther into this wretched country, uncertain of his road and *Mazeppa's* fidelity. *Mazeppa* appeared at last, but rather as a fugitive than a powerful ally. The *Moscovites* had discovered and prevented his designs. They had

fallen



fallen upon the *Cosaques* and cut them in pieces; his principal friends were taken sword in hand, and thirty of them had been broke upon the wheel. His towns were laid in ashes, his treasures plundered, the provisions he was preparing for the King of *Sweden* seized; and he was scarce able to escape himself with six thousand men, and some few horses loaden with gold and silver. However, he gave the King hopes of supporting him by his intelligences in this unknown country, and the affection of all the *Cosaques*, who, enraged against the *Moscovites*, came in troops to the camp, and brought them provisions.

*Charles* hoped at least that General *Levenhaup* would come and repair this ill fortune. He was to bring with him about fifteen thousand *Swedes*, which were more valuable than a hundred thousand *Cosaques*, with provisions of ammunition and victual. He arrived at last, but almost in the same condition as *Mazeppa*.

He had already passed the *Boristhenes* above *Mobilou*, and advanced about twenty leagues farther, on the road to *Ukrania*. He brought the King a convoy of eight thousand waggons, with the money he had raised in *Lithuania*, and as he was upon his march. Upon coming up towards *Lesno*, near the place where the rivers of *Pronia* and *Soffa* join to disembogue themselves far below into the *Boristhenes*, the Czar appeared at the head of fifty thousand men.

The *Swedish* General, who had not quite sixteen thousand, resolved not to intrench. Their many victories had inspired the *Swedes* with so much confidence, that they never enquired after the number of the enemy, but only where they lay,



lay. *Levenhaup* therefore marched against them without hesitation on the seventh of *October* 1708 in the afternoon. Upon the first assault they killed fifteen hundred *Moscovites*. The Czar's army fell into confusion, and fled on all sides; and the Emperor of *Russia* was upon the point of seeing himself entirely defeated. He perceived that the safety of his dominions depended upon the action of that day, and that he was utterly undone, *Levenhaup* joined the King of *Sweden* with a victorious army.

As soon as he saw his troops begin to fall back, he ran to the rear-guard, where the *Cosaques* and *Calmouks* were posted: "I charge you, says he, "to fire upon every man that runs away, and "even to kill me, if I should be so cowardly, as "to turn my back." From thence he turned to the van-guard, rallied his troops in person, assisted by Prince *Menzicof*, and Prince *Gallicsin*. *Levenhaup*, who had pressing orders to join his master, chose rather to continue on his march than renew the fight, thinking he had done enough to discourage the enemy from pursuing.

At eleven the next morning the Czar attacked him near a morass, and drew out his army at length, that he might surround him. The *Swedes* faced about, and the fight lasted two hours with equal resolution. The *Moscovites* lost three times as many men, but still kept their ground, and the victory was undecided.

At four in the afternoon General *Baver* brought the Czar a reinforcement of troops. The battle was then renewed for the third time, with more fury and eagerness than ever, and lasted till night came on. At last numbers carried it. The *Swedes* were



broken, routed, and driven as far as to their baggage. *Levenhaup* rallied his troops behind his waggons, and though the *Swedes* were conquered, they did not fly. They were about nine thousand in number, and not a single man of them was killed; and the General drew them up as easy in order of battle, as though they had never been beaten.

The Czar on the other side passed the night under arms, and commanded his officers under pain of being cashiered, and his soldiers under pain of death, not to stir for plunder.

The next morning at day-break he ordered a fresh assault. *Levenhaup* had retired to an advantageous ground at some miles distance, after having nailed down part of his cannon, and set fire to his waggons.

The *Moscovites* came time enough to hinder the whole convoy from being consumed in the flames; they seized upon six thousand waggons, which they saved. The Czar, who was desirous of completing the defeat of the *Swedes*, sent General *Flug* to fall upon them again the fifth time; and the General offered them an honourable capitulation. *Levenhaup* refused it, and the fifth battle was as bloody as any of the former. Of the nine thousand soldiers he had left, he lost one thousand, and the other remained unbroken. At last night coming on, *Levenhaup*, after having sustained five battles against fifty thousand men, swam over the *Soffa*, followed by the five thousand men he had left alive, and the wounded were carried over on floats. The Czar lost above twenty thousand *Moscovites* in these five engagements, in which he had the glory of conquering



quering the *Swedes*, and *Levenhaup* the reputation of disputing the victory for three days, and of retreating without being broken at last. He then came to his master's camp with the honour of having made so good a defence, but bringing with him neither ammunition nor army.

King *Stanislaus* would have been glad to have joined *Charles* at the same time, but the *Moscovites* who had conquered *Levenhaup* lay in his way, and *Siniausky* employed him enough in *Poland*.

The King of *Sweden* thus found himself without provisions or communication with *Poland*, surrounded with enemies in the midst of a country where he had scarce any refuge but his fortitude of mind.

In this extremity the memorable winter of 1709. which was still more terrible in the frontiers of *Europe*, than it was in *France*, carried off part of his army. *Charles* resolved to brave the seasons, as he had done his enemies, and ventured to make long marches with his troops during the excessive severity of the weather. 'Twas in one of these marches that two thousand of his men were frozen to death almost before his eyes. The horsemen had no boots, and the foot went without shoes, and almost without clothes. They were forced to make stockings of the skins of beasts in the best manner they could. They often wanted bread. They were obliged to throw the better part of their cannon into quagmires and rivers, for want of horses to draw them along. So that this once flourishing army was reduced to four or twenty thousand men ready to perish for hunger. They no longer received news from *Sweden*, nor



were able to send thither. In this condition only one officer complained. "How, says the King, are you uneasy that you are so far from your wife? If you are a true soldier I will carry you to that distance, that you shall scarce hear from *Sweden* once in three years.

A soldier ventured with a murmur to present him, in presence of the whole army, with a piece of bread, that was black and mouldy, made of barley and oats, the only food they then had, nor had they enough of this: The King received the piece of bread without the least emotion, eat it entirely up, and then said coldly to the soldier, It is not good, but it may be eaten. This little turn, if any thing may be called little, that serves to increase respect and confidence, contributed more than all the rest to support the *Swedish* army under extremities, which would have been intolerable under any other General.

In this situation he at last received news from *Stockholm*, but it was only to inform him of the death of his sister the Dutcheß of *Holstein*, who was carried off by the small-pox in *December* 1708. in the 27th year of her age. She was a Princess as mild and compassionate, as her brother was importunate in his disposition and implacable in his revenge. He had always expressed a very great affection for her, and was the more afflicted at her loss, as beginning now to grow unfortunate himself, he became sensible of deeper impressions.

He learnt also that they had raised troops and money pursuant to his orders: But nothing could reach his camp; as there lay between him and *Stockholm* near five hundred leagues, and an enemy superior in number to encounter.

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The Czar, who was as active as the King of Sweden, after having sent fresh forces into Poland to the assistance of the confederates, united under General *Siniauski* against *Stanislaus*, advanced very soon into *Ukrania* in the midst of this severe winter to oppose the King of Sweden. He continued there with the artful view of weakening the enemy by small engagements; for by this means he thought the Swedish army must be ruined entirely at last, as it could not be recruited, whilst he was able to draw fresh forces every moment out of his own dominions.

The cold there must have been excessive indeed, since it obliged the two enemies to agree upon a suspension of arms. But upon the first of February they began to engage again in the midst of ice and snows.

After several small skirmishes, and some disadvantages, the King's army was reduced in April to eighteen thousand Swedes. *Mazeppa* alone, the Prince of the *Cosaques*, supplied them with the necessaries of life. Without his assistance the army must have perished through hunger and misery. The Czar in this conjuncture offered conditions to *Mazeppa*, to draw him again into his service. But the *Cosaque* continued faithful to his new ally, whether it were through fear of the terrible punishment of the wheel, by which he had lost his friends, or whether through a desire of revenge.

*Charles* with his eighteen thousand Swedes, and as many *Cosaques*, had not laid aside the design, or hopes of penetrating as far as *Moscow*. Towards the end of May he went to lay siege to *Pultowa*, upon the river *Vorflat*, on the borders



*Ukrania* eastward, about thirteen long leagues from the *Boristhenes*, where the Czar had erected a magazine. If the King took it, it would open the road to *Moscow*, and in the abundance he could then possess, he could at least wait for the coming up of the succours he still expected from *Sweden*, *Livonia*, *Pomerania*, and *Poland*. His refuge being then in the conquest of *Pultowa* he carried on the siege with vigour. *Mazeppa*, who had a correspondence in the town, assured him he would soon be master of it; and hope began to revive in his army. His soldiers looked on the taking of *Pultowa* as the end of all their miseries.

The King perceived from the beginning of the siege, that he had taught his enemies the art of war. Prince *Menzicof*, notwithstanding all his precautions, threw fresh troops into the town, and the garrison by this means amounted to almost a thousand men.

The King continued the siege with still more warmth, he carried the advanced works and even gave two assaults to the body of the place. The siege was in this condition, when the King, having rode into the river to take a nearer view of some of the works, received a shot from a cannon, which pierced through his boot, and shattered the bone of his heel. There was not the least alteration observed in his countenance, by which it could be suspected that he was wounded; he continued calmly to give orders, and remained near six hours on horseback afterwards. One of his domesticks at last perceiving that the sole of his boot was bloody, made haste to call the surgeons; and the King's pain then began to be  
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so sharp, that they were forced to take him off his horse, and carry him into his tent. The surgeons when they had examined the wound were of opinion that the leg must be cut off. The army was in the utmost consternation. But one of the surgeons named *Newman*, who was better skilled, and more courageous than the rest, was positive that by making deep incisions he could save the King's leg. "Fall to work then," presently," says the King, "cut boldly, fear no thing." He held the leg himself with both hands, looking upon the incisions that were made as though the operation had been performed upon another person.

As they were laying on the dressing, he gave orders for an assault the next morning; but the orders were scarce given, before word was brought him, that the Czar appeared with an army of above seventy thousand men. He was therefore obliged to take another resolution. *Charles* wounded and incapable of acting, saw himself inclosed between the *Borisphenes*, and the river which runs to *Pultowa*, in a desert country, without any places of security, or ammunition, and opposed to an army, which prevented him either from retreating or being supply'd with provisions. In this extremity he did not assemble any council of war, as might have been expected; but on the 7th of *July* at night sent for *Mareschal Renschild* into his tent, and ordered him without delay to prepare for an attack the next morning. *Renschild* did not dispute his master's will, but went out with a resolution to obey him. At the door of the King's tent he met *Count Piper*, with whom he



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had long been at variance, as it often happens between the Minister and the General. *Piper* asked him, if any thing new had happened: No, says the General coldly, and passed on to give his orders. As soon as *Piper* was entered into the tent, "Has *Renchild* said any thing to you?" says the King to him. Nothing, answers *Piper*. "Well then," replies the King, "I tell you that to-morrow we shall give battle." Count *Piper* was astonished at so desperate a resolution; but knew well that his master could not be prevailed on to change his opinion; he only expressed his astonishment by his silence, and left the King to sleep all break of day.

'Twas on the 8th of *July* 1709. that the decisive battle of *Pultowa* was fought between the two most famous monarchs then in the world; *Charles XII.* illustrious by a course of nine years of victories, and *Peter Alexiowitz*, by nine years of fatigue, spent in training up his troops to an equality with the *Swedes*; the one glorious for having given away dominions, the other for having civilized his own: *Charles* in love with danger, and fighting only for glory; *Alexiowitz* not flying from danger, and making war only for interest: The *Swedish* monarch liberal through a greatness of soul; and the *Moscovite* never generous but for some private end: The one sober and continent beyond example, naturally brave, and never cruel but once; the other having not yet worn off the roughness of his education, or the brutality of his country, as terrible to his subjects, as wonderful to strangers, and too much addicted to excesses that shortened his days. *Charles* had the title of *Invincible*, which one unhappy moment



moment might rob him of; but the nations round had already given *Peter Alexiowitz* the name of *Great*, of which no defeat could deprive him, as no victories gave it to him.

To form a clear idea of this battle, and the place where it was fought, we must imagine *Pultowa* lying on the north, the camp of the King of *Sweden* on the south, drawing a little towards the east, his baggage about a mile behind him, and the river of *Pultowa* on the north of the town running from east to west.

The Czar had passed the river about a league from *Pultowa* towards the west, and was beginning to form his camp.

At day-break the *Swedes* appeared out of the trenches with four iron cannons for their whole artillery; the rest were left in the camp with about three thousand men; and four thousand remained with the baggage. So that the *Swedish* army which marched against the enemy, consisted of about five and twenty thousand men, whereof there were not above twelve thousand regular troops.

The Generals *Renchild*, *Field*, *Levenhaup*, *Spenbak*, *Hoorn*, *Sparre*, *Hamilton*, the Prince of *Wirtemberg*, who was related to the King, and some others, most of whom had seen the battle of *Narva*, put the subaltern officers in mind that day, when eight thousand *Swedes* had destroyed an army of a hundred thousand *Moscovites* and their intrenchments. The Officers said the same thing to the soldiers, and all encouraged one another as they marched.

The King conducted the march, carried in a litter at the head of his foot. A party of horse advanced by his order to attack that of the ene-



The battle began with this engagement at half an hour after four in the morning. The enemies horse lay westward on the right of the *Moscovite* camp: Prince *Menzicof* and Count *Galwin* had placed them at a distance between redoubts fortified with cannon. General *Slipenbak* at the head of the *Swedes*, fell upon them. All who have served in the *Swedish* troops know that it was almost impossible to resist the fury of their first shock. The *Moscovite* squadrons were broken and routed. The Czar himself ran to rally them, and his hat was shot through with a musket ball; *Menzicof* had three horses killed under him; and the *Swedes* cried out victory.

*Charles* did not doubt but the battle was gained; he had dispatched General *Creuts* about midnight with five thousand horse or dragoons, who were to take the enemy in flank, whilst he attacked them in front; but his misfortune was that *Creuts* went out of the way, and did not appear. The Czar, who had thought himself lost, had time to rally his horse. He fell upon the King's cavalry on his turn, which not being supported by *Creuts* attachment, was broken likewise, and *Slipenbak* taken prisoner in the engagement. At the same time seventy two cannons from the camp played upon the *Swedish* horse, and the *Russian* foot opening from their lines, advanced to attack the *Swedish* infantry.

The Czar by a presence of mind and a penetration, which in such moments belongs only to men who are truly great, immediately detaches Prince *Menzicof* to post himself between *Pultowa* and the *Swedes*; Prince *Menzicof* executed his master's orders with dexterity and expedition; and



and not only cut off the communication between the *Swedish* army and the troops remaining in the camp before *Pultowa*, but meeting with a *Corps de Reserve* of three thousand men, he surrounded them and cut them in pieces.

In the mean time the *Moscovite* foot came out of their lines, and advanced in order into the plain. And on the other side, the *Swedish* horse rallied within a quarter of a league from the enemy's army. And the King assisted by General *Renchild*, made a disposition for a general engagement.

He ranged what troops were left him in two lines; his foot were posted in the center, and his horse made up the two wings. The Czar disposed his army in the same manner; he had the advantage of numbers, and of seventy two cannon whilst the *Swedes* had no more than four, and began to want powder.

The Emperor of *Moscow* was in the center of his army, having then the title only of Major General, and seemed to serve under General *Csermetoff*. But he went as Emperor from rank to rank mounted on a *Turkish* horse, which was present from the Grand Signior, animating the officers and soldiers, and promising every one of them rewards.

*Charles* did all he could to sit his horse at the head of his troops; but finding the posture too painful, he returned to his litter, holding his sword in one hand, and a pistol in the other.

At nine in the morning the battle was renewed. One of the first discharges of the *Moscovite* cannon carried off the two horses of the King's litter; he caused two others to be straight put to it, and

second



second volley broke the litter in pieces and overturned the King. The troops which fought near him believed him killed. The *Swedes* in a continuation lost ground, and the enemy's cannon continuing to play upon them, the first line fell back upon the second, and the second fled. In this last action the *Swedish* army was routed by a single line of ten thousand men of the *Moscovite* foot; so much were matters changed.

The King, carried upon pikes by four grenadiers, covered with blood, and all over bruised with his fall, and scarce able to speak, cried out, *Swedes, Swedes*. Anger and grief renewing his strength, he tried to rally some of his regiments. But the *Moscovites* closely pursued them with their swords, bayonets, and pikes. The Prince of *Wirtemberg*, General *Renchild*, *Hamilton*, and *Stalberg* were already taken prisoners, the camp before *Pultowa* forced, and all in a confusion, which did not admit of any remedy. Count *Pier* with all the officers of the chancery had quit the camp, and neither knew what to do, nor what was become of the King. They ran from one side of the plain to the other. Major *Bere* offered to lead them to the baggage; but the clouds of dust and smoke, which covered the field, and their own confusion, which was very natural in such a scene of desolation, carried them strait to the counterscarp of the town, where they were all taken prisoners by the garrison.

The King would not fly, and could not defend himself. General *Poniatofsky* chanced to be by him that instant; he was a colonel of the *Swedish* guards of King *Stanislaus*, and a person of uncommon merit, whom his attachment to the person

H

of



of *Charles* had engaged to follow him into *Ukraine* without any post in the army. He was one, who in all the occurrences of his life, and in dangers, where others at most would have only behaved with courage, shewed an immediate presence of mind, which was ever attended with success. He made a sign to a young *Swede*, named *Federick*, the King's first valet de chambre, and as intrepid as his master; they take the King under their arms, and assisted by a *Draban* who came up to them, mount him on horseback, notwithstanding the excessive pains of his wound. *Federick* mounted another horse riding near his master, and supporting him from time to time.

*Poniatofsky*, though he had no command in the army, being made a General on this occasion by necessity, drew up five hundred horse near the King's person; some of them *Drabans*, others officers, and others private troopers. This body reanimated by the misfortune of their Prince, made their way through more than ten regiments of *Moscovites*, and conducted *Charles* through the midst of the enemy the space of a league, to the baggage of the *Swedish* army.

This surprizing retreat was of great consequence in such distress, but the King was under a necessity of flying still farther. They found amongst the baggage Count *Piper's* coach, for the King never had one since he left *Stockholm*. They put him into it, and made towards the *Boristhenes* with all possible speed. The King, who, from the time he was set on horseback till he came to the baggage, had never spoke one word, then asked what was become of Count *Piper*. They told him he was taken with all the officers of chance-ry:



and General *Renchild*, and the Duke of *Wir-*  
*temberg*? added the King. They are prisoners  
 too, says *Poniatofsky*. Prisoners to *Moscovites*!  
 replies *Charles*, shrugging up his shoulders. Come  
 then let us go to the *Turks* rather. They  
 did not observe however the least alteration in  
 his countenance, and whoever had then seen him,  
 did not know his condition, would have never  
 suspected him to have been either conquered or  
 wounded.

Whilst he was getting off, the *Moscovites* seiz-  
 ed upon his artillery in the camp before *Pultowa*,  
 his baggage, and the money he had raised for car-  
 rying on the war, where they found six millions  
 in specie, the spoils of *Poland* and *Saxony*. Near  
 nine thousand *Swedes* were killed in the battle,  
 about six thousand were taken, three or four thou-  
 sand ran away, and were never heard of since.  
 There still remained near eighteen thousand men;  
 comprehending the *Cosaques*, with the *Swedes* and  
*Poles*, who fled towards the *Boristhenes* under the  
 direction of General *Levenhaup*. He marched  
 the way with these fugitive troops, whilst the  
 King took another road with some of his horse.  
 The coach, in which he rode, broke down in  
 his march, and they set him again on horseback.  
 And to finish his misfortune, he wandered all night  
 in a wood; there his courage not being able to  
 supply any longer his exhausted spirits, and the  
 pain of his wound becoming more insupportable  
 by fatigue, and his horse falling under him thro'  
 excessive weariness, he rested himself for some  
 hours at the foot of a tree, in danger of being sur-  
 prized every moment by the conquerors, who  
 sought for him on all sides.



At last, on the 9th of *July* at night, he found himself upon the banks of the *Boristhenes*, and *Levenkaup* just arrived with the remains of his army. The *Swedes* saw their King again, whom they judged to have been dead, with a joy mixed with sorrow. The enemy drew nigh, and they had no bridge to pass the river, nor time to make one, nor powder to defend themselves against the enemy who came upon them, nor provisions to hinder the army from perishing with hunger who had eat nothing for two days; but it is to be considered that the shattered remains of the army were *Swedes*, and that the conquered King was *Charles XII*. Almost all the officers imagined they were to halt there, in expectation of the *Moscovites*, and that they were either to conquer or die, on the banks of the *Boristhenes*; and the King had undoubtedly taken that resolution had he not been quite spent with fatigue. His wound was now come to a suppuration, attended with a fever; and it has been observed, that men of the greatest intrepidity, when they are seized with the fever that is common in a suppuration, generally lose that impulse to valour, which, like other virtues, requires a clear and undisturbed head, to facilitate its operations. *Charles* was therefore no longer himself, but was carried like a sick person in a state of insensibility. By good fortune there was still left a sorry calash, which by chance they had brought along with them; this they embarked in a little boat, and the King and General *Mazeppa* in another. The latter had saved several coffers full of money, but the current being very rapid, and a violent wind beginning to blow, the *Cosaque* threw more than



three parts of his treasures into the river, to lighten the boat. *Mullern* the King's Chancellor, and Count *Poniatofsky*, who was now more than ever necessary to the King, for his remarkable presence of mind under difficulties, crossed over in other barks with some of the officers. Three hundred troopers of the King's guard, and a very great number of *Poles* and *Cosagues* relying upon the goodness of their horses, ventured to pass the river by swimming. Their troop keeping close together resisted the current, and broke the waves; but all who attempted to cross separately a little below, were carried away by the stream and sunk in the river. Of all the foot who tried to pass over, there was not one that got to the other side.

Whilst the routed part of the army were in this extremity, Prince *Menzicof* came up with ten thousand horse, having each a foot soldier behind him. The carcasses of the *Swedes* that lay dead in the way, of their wounds, fatigue, and hunger, sufficiently pointed out to Prince *Menzicof* the road which the body of the army had taken. The Prince sent a trumpet to the *Swedish* General to offer him a capitulation. Four general officers were presently sent by *Levenhaup* to receive the law of the conqueror. Before that sixteen thousand soldiers of King *Charles* would have attacked all the forces of the *Russian* empire, and have perished to the last man, rather than have surrendered; but after a battle lost, and a flight of two days, not having their eyes any longer upon their Prince, who was constrained to fly himself, the strength of every soldier being spent, and their courage no longer supported by any



any hope, the love of life took place of intrepidity. There was only one Colonel, named *Troutfetre*, and who is now Governor of *Stralsund*, who, when he saw the *Moscovites* approach, placed himself at the head of a battalion, with an intent to attack them; and hoping that his example would animate the rest of the army with the same resolution; but *Levenhaup* was obliged to oppose this unavailing ardour. The capitulation was settled, and the whole army were made prisoners of war. Some of the soldiers, in despair to fall into the hands of the *Moscovites*, threw themselves into the *Boristhenes*: Two Officers of the regiment commanded by the brave *Troutfetre*, killed themselves upon the spot, and the rest were made slaves. They all filed off in the presence of Prince *Menzicof*, laying their arms at his feet, as thirty thousand *Moscovites* had done nine years before at the King of Sweden's at *Narva*. But whereas the King then sent back all the *Moscovite* prisoners, whom he was not afraid of, the Czar retained all the *Swedes* that were taken at *Pultowa*.

These unhappy creatures were afterwards dispersed in the Czar's dominions, and particularly in *Siberia*, a vast province of the greater *Tartary* which extends itself eastward to the frontiers of the *Chinese* empire. In this barbarous country where even the use of bread was not then known, the *Swedes*, grown ingenious by necessity, exercised the trades and arts of which they had an Idea. And all the distinctions, which fortune makes among men, were then banished. The officer, who could follow no handicraft trade, was forced to cleave and carry wood for the soldiers.



that was now turned taylor, draper, joiner, mason or smith, and got a subsistence by his labour. Some of the officers became painters, and other architects; and some of them taught languages and mathematicks; they even went so far as to erect publick schools, which in time grew to be so useful and famous, that they sent children thither for education from *Moscow*.

Count *Piper*, the King of *Sweden*'s first minister, was a long time imprison'd at *Petersburg*. The Czar was persuaded, with the rest of *Europe*, that this Minister had sold his master to the Duke of *Marlborough*, and had brought the arms of *Sweden* upon *Moscovy*, which might have given peace to *Europe*; and he made his captivity the more severe upon this supposition. *Piper* died some years after at *Moscow*, having received but little assistance from his family, which lived in great opulence at *Stockholm*, and ineffectually lamented by his King, who would never condescend to offer a ransom for his Minister, which he feared the Czar would not accept; for there was never any cartel of exchange between *Charles* and the Czar.

The Emperor of *Moscovy*, elate with a joy he was under no concern to dissemble, received upon the field of battle the prisoners they brought him, in troops; and asked every moment, Where then is my brother *Charles*?

He paid the *Swedish* Generals the compliment of inviting them to dine with him. Amongst other questions, he asked General *Renchild*, What number the troops of the King his master might amount to before the battle? *Renchild* answered, That the King only kept the list of them, which



he never communicated to any Body; but he thought the whole might be about five and thirty thousand men, whereof eighteen thousand were *Swedes*, and the rest *Cosagues*. The Czar seemed surprized, and asked how they durst venture to penetrate into so distant a country, and lay siege to *Pultowa* with such a handful of men. We were not always consulted, answers the *Swedish* General, but, as faithful servants, we obeyed our Master's orders, without ever contradicting them. The Czar, upon this answer, turned round towards certain courtiers, who had formerly been suspected of engaging in a conspiracy against him. "Ah! says he, see how a Sovereign should be obeyed." And then taking a glass of wine, "To the health, says he, of my masters in the art of war." *Renchild* asked, Who those were whom he honoured with so high a title? "You Gentlemen, the *Swedish* Generals," replies the Czar. "Your Majesty then, says *Renchild*, is very ungrateful to treat your masters so severely." When dinner was over, the Czar ordered their swords to be restored to all the general officers, and conducted himself to them as a Prince who had a mind to give his subjects lessons of generosity and civility, which he was well acquainted with.

Thus the *Swedish* army, which left *Saxony* so triumphant, was now no more. One half of them perished by want, and the other half were made slaves or massacred. *Charles XII.* had lost in one day the fruit of nine years pains, and almost a hundred battles. He fled in a wretched calash, having Major General *Hoord* by his side, dangerously wounded. The rest of his troops followed,



followed, some on foot, others on horseback, and some in waggons, across a desert, where they found neither huts, tents, men, animals nor roads; every thing was wanting there even to water itself. 'Twas then the beginning of *July*; the country situate in the 47th degree; the dry sand of the desert rendered the heat of the sun more insupportable; the horses fell by the way, and the men were ready to die with thirst. Count *Poniatofsky*, who was a little better mounted than the rest, advanced before them into the plain, and having spied a willow, he judged there must be water nigh, and he sought about, till he found the spring. This happy discovery saved the lives of the King of *Sweden's* little troop. After five days march he found himself upon the banks of the river *Hippanis*, now called the *Bogh* by the barbarians, who have spoiled even to their very names the countries, which the *Grecian* colonies formerly made to flourish. This river joins the *Boristhenes* some miles lower, and falls along with it into the *Black Sea*.

Beyond the *Bogh*, towards the south, lyes the little town of *Ozakow*, a frontier of the *Turkish* Empire. The inhabitants seeing a troop of soldiers coming towards them, whose dress and language they were strangers to, refused to carry them over to *Ozakow* without an order from *Mahamet Basha* the Governor of the town. The King sent an express to the Governor to ask a passage; but the *Turk* not knowing what to do in a country where a false step very often costs a man his life, durst take nothing upon himself without having first the permission of the *Basha* of the province, who resides at *Bender* in *Bessarabia*, thirty leagues from



from *Ozakow*. The permission came with orders to pay the King all the honours due to a Monarch allied to the *Porte*, and to furnish him with all necessary provisions. During these delays, the *Moscovites* having passed the *Boristhenes* pursued the King with all possible speed, and if they had come an hour sooner they must have taken him. He had scarce passed the *Bogh* in the *Turkish* boats, before his enemies appeared to the number of almost six thousand horse. And his Majesty had the misfortune of seeing five hundred of his little troop, who had not been able to get over time enough, seized by the *Moscovites* on the other side the river. The *Basha* of *Ozakow* asked his pardon by an interpreter for the delays, which had occasioned the taking those five hundred men prisoners, and besought him not to complain of it to the Grand Signior. *Charles* promised him he would not, but gave him at the same time a severe reprimand, as if he had been speaking to one of his own subjects.

The Commander of *Bender*, who was also *Seraskier*, a title which answers to that of General, and *Basha* of the province, which signifies Governor and Intendant, sent presently an *Aga* to compliment the King, and offer him a magnificent tent, with provisions, baggage, waggons, and all the conveniencies, officers, and attendants requisite to conduct him handsomely to *Bender*: For it is customary with the *Turks* not only to defray the charges of Ambassadors to the place of their residence, but plentifully to supply the necessity of such Princes as take refuge amongst them, during the time of their continuance with them.

*The End of the Fourth Book.*

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THE  
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OF  
CHARLES XII.  
KING of SWEDEN.

BOOK V.

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*The state of the Ottoman Porte. CHARLES resides near Bender. His employment. His intrigues at the Porte. His designs. Augustus restored to his Throne. The King of Denmark makes a descent upon Sweden. All the other territories of CHARLES are invaded. The Czar makes rejoicings at Moscow. The affair of Pruth. The history of the Czarina.*

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**A**CHMET III. was at that time Emperor of the *Turks*. He had been placed upon the throne in 1703, in the room of his brother *Mustapha*, by a revolution like that in *England*, which transferred the crown from *James II.* to his son-in-law *William*. *Mustapha* being

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being governed by his Mufti, whom the *Turks* hated, engaged the whole empire in an insurrection against him. His army with which he proposed to punish the male-contented going over to them, he was seized, deposed in form, and his brother taken from the *Seraglio* to be made Sultan, with scarce one drop of blood spilt upon the occasion. *Achmet* shut up the deposed Sultan in the *Seraglio* at *Constantinople*, where he lived several years after, to the great surprise of *Turkey*, which had been used to see the dethronement of her Princes always immediately followed by their death.

All the return the new Sultan made for a crown, which he owed to the Ministers, to the Generals, to the Officers of the Janisaries, and in a word, to those who had a hand in the revolution, was to put them all to death one after another, for fear they should afterwards project a second revolution. By sacrificing so many brave men, he weakened the forces of the empire, but established his throne. From this time his mind was bent upon heaping up treasures, and he was the first of the *Ottomans* that had the courage to make a small alteration in the money, and impose new taxes; but he was obliged to drop both these enterprizes, for fear of a revolt: for the rapacity and tyranny of the Grand Signior is scarce ever felt by any but the Officers of the empire, who, whatever they are else, are domestick slaves of the Sultan; but the rest of the Musulmans live in profound security, without danger of their lives, fortunes, or liberty.

Such was the Emperor of the *Turks*, to whom the King of *Sweden* fled for refuge: and he had no sooner set foot upon the Sultan's territories at *Ozakow*, than he wrote him the following letter.

To



To the most High, most Glorious, Invincible, and August Emperor of many Empires, King of many Kingdoms, Head and Protector of many Nations, may the Almighty bless and prolong your Reign.

**T**HIS letter, signed with our Royal Hand, is to acquaint your Imperial Highness, that having punished with no less success than justice the treacherous breakers of the faith of treaties, and the law of nations; having driven King Augustus out of Poland, of which he was rather the Tyrant than the King, and given the Poles a King of their own nation, who is a friend of your sublime Porte; and having pursued the Czar flying before us as far as Pultowa, Heaven has permitted our army, tired out with long marches, and in want of every thing, to be overwhelmed by the enemy who were thrice our number, and has suffered this day to be a day of grief and misfortune to us.

Not being in a place to raise new forces, and abhorring to fall into barbarous and perfidious hands, we are come to seek for refuge and assistance in the territories of your Imperial Highness, that we may be enabled to return to Poland, in order to rejoin our armies, and support the King we have made there.

What we desire is to have you our friends, and ourselves yours. As a proof of our sincere affection we represent to you, that if you give the Czar, whose ambition is neither directed by justice, nor honour, nor true courage, time to take the advantage of our disaster, he will fall upon your territories, when you little expect him, as he has invaded



invaded our countries; but why do I say when you little expect him! Has he not already built forts upon the Tanais and the Palus Mæotis? Does he not already threaten you with his fleets?

To prevent this, there can be no way so proper as a new alliance between your sublime Porte and Us, provided we can but return to Poland, and carry our own states with your valiant troops, and carry our arms again into the empire of this perfidious Czar, to put a stop to his unjust ambition.

We shall never forget the favours we shall receive from you, and shall value ourselves upon being inviolably,

Your faithful friend,

At Ozakow,  
23 July 1709.

Charles XII.

Son of Charles XI.

The King suffered this letter to be sent away tho' it too much injured the character of his enemies, as well as disguised his own. Perhaps after having treated the Czar, and King *Augustus* with great respect in his victories, his defeat had soured him; or else he took it for *Turkish* breeding, to rail at those against whom we ask assistance.

*Achmet*, who had been beforehand with him by sending a solemn embassy in the time of his victories, made him sensible now of the difference he made between an Emperor of the *Turks*, and a King of part of *Scandinavia*, a Christian vanquished and fugitive. He did not answer him till six months after, and then refused to be explicit upon the alliance proposed against the Czar.



## CHARLES XII. 171

This proposal, says the Sultan to him in his letter, requires a deliberate examination. I shall leave it to the wisdom of my great Divan. I value your friendship, and grant you mine together with my protection. I have given orders to the Pashas of Natolia and Romelia, to provide a guard to conduct you safely where you think proper. Just as the Basha Serasquier of Bender will advance you 500 \* dollars a day, with all necessary provisions for your self and your attendants, and horses, that you may live as becomes a King.

Given at Constantinople the first day of the month Reval the 1121 year of the Hegira.

From the first moment of King Charles's repairing to the Turkish territories, he had laid the design of turning the Ottoman arms upon his enemies: He already fancied he saw himself at the head of the Turkish forces, reducing Poland again under the yoke, and subduing Moscow. M. de Neugbaver set out from Ozakow for Constantinople, with the character of the King's envoy extraordinary. Count Poniatosky, a person equally capable and resolute, of an engaging and agreeable temper, born with the talent of persuading and pleasing all nations, attended the Swedish embassy, but in a private capacity, in order to sound the dispositions of the Constantinopolitan Ministry, without being tied up to the usual forms, and giving too much ground for suspicion: He knew how to gain in a short time the favour of the Grand Visir, who loaded him with presents; and had the art to convey a letter of the King of Sweden's to the Sultana Valide, mother to the Emperor then upon the throne, and who had

\* A dollar is worth about a French crown of three livres.

formerly



formerly been ill used by her son, but now began to recover her interest in the *Seraglio*. He entered into a close friendship with one *Br* *Frenchman*, who had been Chancellor to the *French* embassy. This man was perpetually talking of the King of *Sweden*'s exploits to the chief of the Sultana's eunuchs, who charmed his mistresses with repeating them. The Sultana, by secret inclination; with which most women find themselves inspired in favour of extraordinary men, even without having ever seen them, took the King's part openly in the *Seraglio*, she called him by no other name than that of her Lion. And when will you, said she sometimes to the Sultana her Son, help my Lion to devour this *Czar*. She even dispensed with the strict rules of the *Seraglio*, so far as to write several letters with her own hand to Count *Poniatosky*, in whose custody they still are at the time of my writing this history. One of those, who entered into *Poniatosky*'s designs with the greatest abilities, was *Fonseca* *Portuguese* physician, fixed at *Constantinople*, a learned and ingenious person, who joined the knowledge of men to that of his own art, and whose profession procured him access to the *Ottoman Porte*, and often an intimacy with the *Vizirs*.

At length the King of *Sweden*'s party was become so powerful at *Constantinople*, by *Poniatosky*'s management, that the faction of the *Moscovite* Envoy thought their only refuge was to poison him. Accordingly they prevailed upon one of his domesticks to give him poison in a dish of coffee; but the crime was discovered before it was put in execution. The poison was found in the servant's hands, in a little phial, which they carried



ed to the Grand Signior. The poisoner was tried  
a full Divan, and condemned to the galleys;  
for the *Turkish* law never punishes such crimes ca-  
tally, as were intended only, but not executed.

The Grand Visir appeared as eager as the  
Sultana *Valide* to serve the King of *Sweden*: He  
old *Poniatosky*, giving him at the same time a  
urse of 1000 ducats, I will take your King in  
ne hand, and a sword in the other, and carry  
im to *Moscow*, at the head of 200000 men.  
his Visir, by name *Chourlouly Ali-Basha*, was a  
ery able minister, expert in the art of war, and  
better politician than such persons usually are.  
He had settled the imperial revenues under excel-  
ent regulations. He gave away small sums of  
oney willingly, which gained him creatures;  
ut much more willingly received great sums of  
em, when he was upon any important negoti-  
tions, which made it seem very strange, that  
e should appear so favourable to an unfortunate  
King, who at that time had little to give him.  
He was the son of a peasant at the village of  
*Chourlou*. Among the *Turks* it is no reproach  
o a great man to have been of such an extrac-  
ion. Birth in that country is not at all re-  
arded; merit is looked upon as every thing.  
t is common there to see the son of a labourer  
made a chief minister, and the son of a Visir fol-  
ow the plough.

However the King was honourably conducted  
o *Bender* through the desert that was formerly  
called the wilderness of the *Getæ*. The *Turks*  
took care that nothing should be wanting upon  
he road to make his journey agreeable. Several  
*Poles*, *Swedes* and *Cosaques* that had made their  
escape



escaped one after another out of the hands of the *Moscovites*, came by different ways to increase his train upon the road. When he arrived at *Bender* he had 1800 men with him, who were all fed and lodged, both they and their horses, at the expence of the Grand Signior.

The King chose to encamp near *Bender* rather than lodge in the town. The *Serasquier Jussuf Bascha* caused a magnificent tent to be pitched for him, and tents also were provided for all the Lords of his retinue. Some time after the King built a house in this place, and his officers did the same, after his example: The soldiers also raised barracks, so that the camp by degrees became a little town. The King, being not yet cured of his wound, was obliged to have a curious bone taken out of his foot; but, as soon as he was able to mount a horse, he renewed his usual fatigues, rising always before the sun, tiring three horses a day, and exercising his soldiers; but sometimes he played at chess with General *Poniatofsky*, or *M. de Grothusen*, his Treasurer. Those who had a mind to gain his favour, attended him at his horse-courses, and were all day long in the boots. One morning going into the house of his Chancellor *Mullern*, who was asleep, he forbade them to awake him, and waited in the anti-chamber, where there was a large fire in the chimney and near it several pair of shoes that *Mullern* had sent for from *Germany*, for his own use. The King threw them all into the fire, and then went away. When the Chancellor upon waking perceived the smell of the burnt leather, and had enquired into the reason of it, "What a strange King is this, says he, that his Chancellor must be always booted!"



At *Bender* he found plenty of every thing about him; a happiness very rarely attained to by a conquered and fugitive Prince: For besides provision more than sufficient, and the five hundred crowns a day which he received from the *Ottoman* munificence, he drew money also from *France*, and borrowed of the merchants at *Constantinople*. Part of this money was employed in carrying on intrigues in the *Seraglio*, in purchasing the favour of the *Visirs*, or procuring their ruin. The rest he distributed profusely among his officers, and the Janisaries of *Bender*. *Grothusen* his favourite and treasurer was the dispenser of his liberalities; a man, who, contrary to the custom of persons in that station, was as much pleased with giving as his master. He brought him one day an account of sixty thousand crowns in two trunks, ten thousand given to the *Swedes* and Janisaries by the generous orders of his Majesty, and the rest spent by myself. "See," says the King, "how I like my friends should give in their accounts." *Mullern* makes me read whole pages for the sum of ten thousand livres. But I like *Grothusen's* laconick style much better." One of his old officers, thought to be a little covetous, complained to the King that he gave all to *Grothusen*. "I give money," replies the King, "to none but those who know how to make use of it." This generosity often reduced him to such straits, that he had not wherewithal to give. A better oeconomy in his liberalities had been more for his advantage and not less honourable, but it was this Prince's failing, to drive all the virtues to excess.

Great



Great numbers of strangers ran from *Constantinople* to see him. The *Turks* and neighbouring *Tartars* came thither in crowds; all honoured and admired him. His rigidness in abstaining from wine, and his regularity in attending the public devotions twice a day, made them say that he was a true Musulman. They were impatient to march with him to the conquest of *Moscovy*.

While he continued at *Bender*, which was longer than he thought to do, he insensibly acquired a taste for books. Baron *Fabricius*, \* son to the Duke of *Holstein's* first Minister, a very agreeable young man, of such gaiety of temper, and an easy turn of wit as takes with Princes, was the person that prevailed upon him to read. He had been sent as Envoy to him at *Bender*, to take care of the interests of the young Duke of *Holstein*, and carried his point by the agreeableness of his manner and behaviour. He had read all *French* writers of reputation, and persuaded the King to read the tragedies of the great *Corneille*, those of *M. Racine*, and the works of *M. Despreaux*. His Majesty had no relish for *Despreaux's* satyrs, which are by no means his best performances; but he much admired his other works. But when he read that passage in his eighth satyr in which the author makes *Alexander* a fool and a madman, he tore out the leaf.

Of all the *French* tragedies, *Mithridates* pleased him most, because the situation of that King,

\* The Father of Mons. *Fabricius* was never in the service of the Duke of *Holstein*. He was President of the Regency of *Zell*, for the Elector of *Hanover*, and died in that station at *Zell*. The young *Fabricius* mentioned in this page was Gentleman of the Bed-chamber to the Duke of *Holstein*, and his Envoy to the King of *Sweden*.



vanquished and breathing vengeance, resembled his own. He pointed with his finger before M. Fabricius to the places that struck him, but would read none of them aloud, nor ever venture to speak a word in *French*. Nay, when he afterwards saw at *Bender* M. Desaleurs, the *French* Ambassador at the *Porte*, a person of distinguished merit, but acquainted only with his mother-tongue, he answered him in *Latin*; and upon Desaleurs protesting that he did not understand four words in that language, the King rather than talk *French* called for an interpreter.

Thus was *Charles XII.* employed at *Bender*, where he waited till an army of *Turks* should come to his assistance. To dispose the *Ottoman Porte* to this war, he detached about 800 *Poles* and *Cosaques* of his retinue, with orders to pass the *Neister*, that runs by *Bender*, and to go and observe what passed upon the frontiers of *Poland*.

The *Moscovite* troops dispersed in those quarters fell immediately upon this little company, and pursued them even to the territories of the Grand Signior. This was what the King of *Sweden* expected. His ministers and emissaries at the *Porte* made a great clamour against this irruption, and excited the *Turks* to vengeance: But the Czar's money removed all difficulties. *Tolstoy* his Envoy at *Constantinople* gave the Grand Visir and his creatures part of the six millions that had been found at *Pultowa* in the King of *Sweden's* military chest. After such a defence the Divan found the Czar not guilty. And so far were they from talking of making war against him, that they granted such honours and privileges to his Envoy as the *Moscovite* Ministers had never before enjoyed



joyed at *Constantinople*. He was suffered to have a Seraglio, that is, a palace in the quarters of the *Franks*, and to converse with the foreign Ministers. Nay the Czar thought he had power enough to demand that General *Mazeppa* should be delivered up to him, as *Charles XII.* had caused the unfortunate *Patkul* to be surrendered into his hands. Chourlously *Ali-Basha* could no longer refuse any thing to a Prince, who back'd his demand with millions. Thus the same Grand Visir who before had made a solemn promise to carry the King of *Sweden* into *Moscovy* with two hundred thousand men, had the assurance to make proposal to him of consenting to the sacrifice of General *Mazeppa*. King *Charles* was enraged at the question. However it is not certain, how far the Visir could have carried the matter, had not *Mazeppa*, who was then seventy years of age, died just at this juncture. The King's grief and resentment were very much augmented, when he understood that *Tolstoy*, now become the Czar's Ambassador at the *Porte*, was served in public by the *Swedes* that had been made slaves at *Pultowa*, and that these brave soldiers were daily sold in the market at *Constantinople*. Besides the *Moscovite* Ambassador declared openly, that the Mussulman troops at *Bender* were placed there rather as guard upon the King, than to do him honour.

King *Charles* abandoned by the Grand Visir and conquered by the Czar's money in *Turkey* and he had been by his arms in *Ukrania*, found himself deluded, scorned by the *Porte*, and in a manner a prisoner among the *Tartars*. His attendants began to despair. Himself alone remained firm and did not shew the least dejection of spirit, nor



not for a moment. He imagined the Sultan was ignorant of the intrigues of *Chourlouly Ali* his Grand Visir, and resolved to make him acquainted with them, and *Poniatosky* undertook this bold commission. The Grand Signior went every *Friday* to the mosque encompassed with his Solacks, a kind of guard whose turbans were set with feathers so high, that they hid the Sultan from the eyes of the people. When any one had a petition to present to the Grand Signior, the way was to mix himself among these guards, and hold the petition up in the air. Sometimes the Sultan condescended to take it himself; but more frequently he ordered an Aga to take care of it, and afterwards upon his return from the mosque, caused the petitions to be laid before him. There is no fear of any one's daring to importune him with trifling and unnecessary petitions; for at *Constantinople* they write less in a year, than they do at *Paris* in a day. Much less does any one venture to present petitions against the Ministers, to whom for the most part, the Sultan remits them without reading them. However, *Poniatosky* had no other way to convey the King of *Sweden's* complaints to the Grand Signior. He drew up a representation against the Grand Visir sufficient to ruin him. *M. de Feriolle*, who was at that time the French Ambassador, got it translated into *Turkish*. A Greek was hired to present it, who, mixing himself among the Grand Signior's guards, held up the paper so high, and for so long a time, and made such a noise, that the Sultan perceived it, and took the memoir himself. Some days after the Sultan in answer to the King of *Sweden's* complaints, sent him twenty five



five *Arabian* horses, one of which that had carried his Highness, was covered with a saddle and housings enriched with precious stones, and the stirrups were of massy gold. With this present he sent an obliging letter, but conceived in general terms, and such as gave reason to suspect that the Minister had done nothing without the Sultan's consent. *Chourlouly* also, who knew how to dissimble, sent five very curious horses to the King. But his Majesty, with a haughty air, told the person that brought them; "Go back to your Master, and tell him, that I don't receive presents from mine enemies."

*M. Poniatosky* having already had the courage to get a petition presented against the Grand Visir then formed the bold design of deposing him. He knew the Visir was no favourite of the Sultan's mother, and was the aversion both of *Kisla Aga*, the chief of the black eunuchs, and of the *Aga* of the Janisaries: he encouraged all three to speak against him. It was very strange to see a Christian, a *Pole*, an agent without character of the *Swedish* King, who had fled for refuge to the *Turks*, caballing publickly in a manner at the *Porte* against a Vice-Roy of the *Ottoman* empire and such a one too as was both an useful Minister and a Favourite of his Master. *Poniatosky* had never succeeded, and the bare attempt had cost him his life, had not a stronger power than all those in his interests given the last blow to the Grand Visir *Chourlouly's* fortune.

The Sultan had a young Favourite, who had since govern'd the *Ottoman* empire, and was killed in *Hungary* in 1716, at the battle of *Peterwardin* gained over the *Turks* by Prince *Eugene* of *Savoy*.



His name was *Coumourgî Ali-Basha*. His birth was much the same with that of *Chourlouly*. He was the son of a coal-heaver, as *Coumourgî* signifies: for *Coumour* is the same as coal in *Turkish*. The Emperor *Mahomet*, uncle of *Achmet III.* meeting *Coumourgî* when he was a child, in a forest near *Adrianople*, was so struck with his great beauty, that he sent him to the Seraglio. *Mustapha*, *Mahomet's* eldest son and successor, was much taken with him, and *Achmet III.* made him his favourite. He had then no other place but that of *Selictar Aga*, sword-bearer to the Crown. His early youth would not admit of his pretending to the office of Grand Visir, but yet he had the ambition to do it. The *Swedish* faction could never gain the inclinations of this Favourite. He was at no time a friend to King *Charles*, or any other Christian Prince, or any of their Ministers: but on this occasion, he served King *Charles* without designing it. He joined with the Sultana *Vaside*, and the great officers of the *Porte*, to contrive *Chourlouly's* ruin, whom they all hated. This old Minister, who had long and well served his Master, fell a sacrifice to the caprice of a boy, and the intrigues of a stranger. He was deprived of his dignity and his wealth, his wife who was daughter to the last Sultan *Mustapha* was taken from him, and himself banished to *Cassa*, formerly called *Theodosia*, in *Crim Tartary*. The Grand Seal, that is to say, the seal of the empire, was given to *Numan Couprougly*, grandson to the great *Couprougly*, who took *Candia*. This new Visir was, what Christians misinformed would hardly believe of a *Turk*, a man of inflexible virtue, and a scrupulous observer of the law; and he often

I

opposed



opposed Justice to the Sultan's will. He would not hear of a war against *Moscovy*, which he looked upon as unjust and unnecessary. But the same attachment to his law, which hindered him from waging war against the Czar, contrary to the faith of treaties, made him regard the duty of hospitality with respect to the King of *Sweden*. "The Law, said he to his Master, forbids you to invade the Czar, who has done you no injury; but commands you to succour the King of *Sweden*, who is an unfortunate Prince in your dominions." He sent his Majesty 800 purses, every one of which amounted to 500 crowns, and advised him to return peaceably into his own dominions, through the Emperor of *Germany's* territories, or else in some *French* vessels, that were then lying at the port of *Constantinople* and which *M. de Feriolle*, the *French* Ambassador at the *Porte*, offered King *Charles*, to transport him to *Marseilles*. The King of *Sweden*, who in his prosperity had provoked the Emperor of *Germany*, and disobliged *Lewis XIV.* thought it too great a mortification to owe his return to *France*, and that he should run too great a risk of his liberty in passing thro' the Imperial territories. He rejected with an air of disdain both these ways of returning to his kingdom, and sent the *Visir* and *M. de Feriolle* word, that he should depend upon the Grand Signior's promise and hoped to re-enter *Poland* as a conqueror with an army of *Turks*. In the mean time, while he made his fate depend upon the caprice of a *Visir* and was forced to put up with the affronts as well as receive the favours of the *Ottoman* court, a



his enemies took fresh courage, and invaded his kingdom.

The battle of *Pultowa* was immediately the signal of a revolution in *Poland*. King *Augustus* returned thither protesting against his abdication, and the peace of *Altranstad*, and publickly accusing *Charles XII.* whom he now no longer feared, of robbery and cruelty. He imprisoned *Fincken* and *Imof* his plenipotentiaries, who had signed his abdication, as if in so doing they had exceeded their orders, and betrayed their Master. His *Saxon* troops, that had been the pretence of his dethronement, brought him back to *Warsaw*, attended with most of the *Polish* Palatines, who, having formerly sworn fidelity to him, had afterwards done the same to *Stanislaus*, and were come to do it again to *Augustus*. *Siniausky* himself came into his measures, and forgetting his former ambitious views of making himself King, was content to remain Grand General of the Crown. *Fleming*, his first Minister, who did not dare to continue in *Saxony*, for fear of being delivered up as *Patkul* was, contributed at that time by his management, to bring over great part of the *Polish* Nobility to his Master.

The Pope absolved his people from the oath of allegiance they had sworn to *Stanislaus*. This step of the Holy Father, seasonably taken and supported by *Augustus's* forces, was of no small weight: It established the interest of the court of *Rome* in *Poland*, where they had then no inclination to dispute with the sovereign Pontiffs, the chimerical right of meddling with the temporalities of Kings. Every one was ready to submit to *Augustus's* authority again, and received,



without the least opposition, an useless absolutism which the Nuncio did not fail to represent as necessary.

*Charles's* power, and the grandeur of *Sweden*, were now drawing to their last period. Above ten crowned Heads had for some time beheld, with fear and envy, the *Swedish* government extending itself far beyond its natural bounds, to the other side of the *Baltick* sea, from the *Duna* quite up to the *Elbe*. *Charles's* misfortune, and his absence, awakened the interests and jealousies of all these Princes, which had for a long season been laid asleep by treaties, and an inability to break them.

The Czar, who was more powerful than all of them put together, making immediately the best use of his victory, took *Wibourg*, and all *Carelia*, overrun *Finland* with his troops, sat down before *Riga*, and sent an army into *Poland* to assist *Augustus* in the recovery of his throne. This Emperor was at that time what *Charles* had been formerly, the arbiter of *Poland* and the north. But he consulted only his own interests; whereas *Charles* had never any other views than those of revenge and glory. The *Swedish* monarch had succoured his allies, and crushed his enemies, without insisting upon the least advantage as the fruit of his victories: But the Czar behaved more like a Prince than a hero, and would not assist the King of *Poland*, but upon condition that *Livonia* should be delivered up to him, and that this province, for the sake of which *Augustus* had kindled the war, should remain to the *Moscovites* for ever.

The King of *Denmark* forgetting the treaty of



of *Travandal*, as *Augustus* had that of *Alranstad*, had from that time thoughts of making himself master of the dutchies of *Holstein* and *Bremen*, to which he renewed his pretensions. These three \* Princes met at *Dresden*, at the end of the year 1709. Thus *Augustus*, who two years before had received *Charles* there as his conqueror, saw shortly after, in the same city, those very allies whom the King of *Sweden* had forced him to renounce. At this interview *Peter Alexiowitz*, *Augustus* and *Frederick*, settled the division of the conquests they were going upon. The King of *Prussia* also entertained these three † Monarchs at his castle of *Potsdam*, and entered into their alliance. He had formerly a title to *Swedish Pomerania*, which he had now a mind to revive. The Duke of *Mecklenburgh* was provoked to see *Sweden* still in possession of *Wismar*, the finest city in his dutchy. This Prince was to marry the Emperor of *Moscow*'s niece, and the Czar only wanted a pretence to establish himself in *Germany*, after the example of the *Swedes*. *George*, E-

\* These three Princes the author would have us understand to be the King of *Denmark*, the Czar, and the King of *Poland*; but these Princes never had an interview together at the same time. It was in the months of *May* and *June* in 1709. and the Czar was then in a very distant part of *Moscow*, and fully employed in opposing the King of *Sweden*, who intended to dethrone him.

Mr. *Voltaire*'s Answer. This Fact was published in all the Gazettes.

† The same reason, which prevented the Czar from being at *Dresden*, made it equally impossible for him to be at *Potsdam*. The two Kings of *Denmark* and *Poland* were there, and made a verbal promise of perpetual friendship to each other at *Capul*, the 8th of *July*, the very day on which the King of *Sweden* was defeated at *Pultowa*. The King of *Prussia* refused to enter into the alliance proposed to him by the two Monarchs, and had no thoughts of reviving his pretensions to *Pomerania*.



lector of *Hanover*, wanted likewise to enrich himself with *Charles's* spoils. The Bishop of *Munster* also would have been glad to make the best of some pretensions of his, if he had been in a capacity to do it.

There were about twelve or thirteen thousand *Swedes* who defended *Pomerania*, and the other countries which *Charles* possessed in *Germany*. Here was to have been the seat of the war. But this storm alarmed the Emperor and his allies. For it is a law of the empire, that whoever invades one of the provinces should be reputed an enemy to the whole *Germanic* body.

But there was a still much greater difficulty in the affair. All these Princes, except the Czar, were then in league against *Lewis XIV.* whose power had for some time been as formidable to the empire as that of King *Charles*.

*Germany*, at the beginning of the century, found itself hard pressed from the south to the north, between the *French* and *Swedish* armies. The *French* had passed the *Danube*, and the *Swedes* the *Oder*: If their forces, victorious as they then were, had joined, the empire had been lost. But the same fatality that ruined *Sweden*, had also humbled *France*: However, the power of *Sweden* was not exhausted, and *Lewis XIV.* carried on the war with vigour, though without success. Had *Pomerania*, and the dutchy of *Bremen*, been made the seat of the war, it was to be feared the empire would be the worse for it, and, being weakened on that side, would be less able to hold out against *Lewis XIV.* To remove this inconvenience, the Emperor, the Princes of *Germany*, Queen *Ann* of *England*, and the States General



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General of the United Provinces, concluded at the *Hague*, about the end of the year 1709, one of the most singular treaties that ever was signed.

It was stipulated by these powers, that the fear of the war should not be in *Pomerania*, nor any other country of *Germany*, but that the enemies of *Charles XII.* might attack him every where else. The King of *Poland* and the *Czar* came themselves into this treaty, and caused an article to be inserted, which was as extraordinary as the treaty itself, *viz.* that the 12000 *Swedes* in *Pomerania* should not depart thence to defend their other provinces.

To secure the execution of this treaty, it was proposed to raise an army for maintaining this imaginary neutrality, which was to incamp on the banks of the *Oder*. A strange and unheard of contrivance, to levy an army, in order to prevent a war! Nay, those who were to furnish the army's pay, were for the most part very much concerned to bring about the war they pretended to avert. It was, by the treaty, to consist of the troops of the Emperor, the King of *Prussia*, the Elector of *Hanover*, the Landgrave of *Hesse*, and the Bishop of *Munster*.

The event of this project was such as one might naturally expect. It was not executed. The princes, who were to furnish their *Quota* for raising an army, contributed nothing; not two regiments were formed. There was much talk of neutrality, but no body observed it; and all the northern Princes, who had any controversy with the King of *Sweden*, were left at full liberty to dispute who should have his spoils.



During these conjunctures the Czar having quartered his forces in *Lithuania*, and given orders for carrying on the siege of *Riga*, returned to *Moscow*, to shew his people a sight as new as any thing he had yet done in his Kingdom. It was a triumph very little inferior to that of the old *Romans*. He made his entry into *Moscow* on the first of *January* 1710, under seven triumphal arches erected in the streets, and adorned with all that the climate could furnish, and a flourishing trade, as his industry had made it, could import. The procession began with a regiment of guards, followed by the pieces of artillery taken from the *Swedes* at *Lesnow* and *Pultowa*, each of which was drawn by eight horses covered with scarlet housings reaching down to the ground. Then came the standards, kettle-drums and colours won at these two battles, carried by the officers and soldiers who had taken them: All these spoils were followed by the finest troops of the Czar. After they had filed off, appeared in a chariot made for that purpose, the litter of *Charles XII.* found in the field of battle at *Pultowa*, all broken to pieces by two cannon-shot. Behind this litter marched all the prisoners two by two, among whom was Count *Piper* first Minister of *Sweden*, the famous Mareschal *Renchild*, Count *Levenhaup*, the Generals *Slipenbac*, *Stakelburgh* and *Hamilton*, and all the officers and soldiers who were afterwards dispersed in great *Russia*. They were immediately followed by the Czar, on the same horse he rid upon at the battle of *Pultowa*. A little behind him appeared the Generals who had their share in the success of this battle: And after them came another regiment of guards



guards ; and the waggons loaded with *Swedish* ammunition brought up the rear.

This solemn procession was attended with the ringing all the bells in *Moscow*, with the sound of drums, kettle-drums, trumpets, and an infinite number of musical instruments answering each other ; with volleys discharged from 200 pieces of cannon, and the acclamations of 500000 men, who at every stop the Czar made in his triumphal entry cried, *God preserve the Emperor our father.*

This deluding cavalcade augmented the people's veneration for his person, and perhaps made him appear greater in their eyes, than all the real good he had done them. In the mean time he continued the blockade of *Riga*, and the Generals made themselves masters of the rest of *Livonia*, and part of *Finland*. At the same time the King of *Denmark* came with his intire fleet to make a descent upon *Sweden*, where he landed 17000 men, whom he left under the command of Count *Reventlau*.

*Sweden* was at that time governed by a Regency, composed of some Senators appointed by the King at his departure from *Stockholm*. The Senatorial Body, which looked upon the government as of right belonging to them, was jealous of the Regency, and the state suffered by these divisions. But upon the first news they received at *Stockholm*, after the battle of *Pultowa*, viz. That the King was at *Bender*, in the hands of the *Turks* and *Tartars*, and that the *Danes* had made a descent upon *Schonen*, and taken the town of *Elfsingborg*, all jealousies vanished, and they thought of nothing but saving *Sweden*. There were now



very few regular forces left. For notwithstanding *Charles* had always made his great expeditions at the head of small armies, yet the innumerable battles he had been engaged in for nine years together, the constant necessity he was under of recruiting his forces, and maintaining his garrisons, and the standing army he was obliged to keep always in *Finland*, *Ingria*, *Livonia*, *Pomerania*, *Bremen*, and *Verden*: All this had cost *Sweden*, during the course of the war, above 250000 soldiers, and there remained not so many as 8000 men of the old troops, who, with the new forces, were the only defence of *Sweden*.

King *Charles* XI. among several laws that drew upon him the charge of tyranny, had made some that deserved the thanks of his country: Particularly he formed a militia that continues to this day, and is neither a charge to the publick treasury, nor too burdensome to private persons, and always furnishes the state with soldiers, without taking the husbandman from the plough. The richest towns or lordships, that formerly did or at present do hold of the Crown, maintain a trooper at their own expence. The peasants of each village provide a foot soldier in proportion to their circumstances; that is, there must be a certain estate, suppose of 10 or 12000 livres, before they can be obliged to fit out a soldier for the infantry. He that has but 5 or 6000 livres, joins with another that has as much; and he that has but 3000, contributes his share with several more, and all together supply the state with a man.

If the revenue of the whole village does not amount to more than 10000 livres, that village finds



finds but one man. Upon the death of a soldier they that found him supply his place with another. And thus the number of the militia is always the same, after it has been once settled by the States-general. The peasants build a house or cottage for the soldier they maintain, and assign him and his family a piece of ground, which he is obliged to cultivate. These soldiers who are thus distributed among the villages have their rendezvous, at stated times, in the chief market-town of the canton, under the command of their officers, who are paid out of the publick treasury.

In the more populous countries, each village has his corporal, who exercises his regiment once a week. The sergeant, who has a larger jurisdiction, sees his every five days, and so by degrees to the Colonel, who takes a review of his regiment every three months.

Thus was *Sweden* a seminary of soldiers during the wars of *Charles XII.* The nation is born with a military genius, and the whole people insensibly received the same cast of mind as their King. From one end of the country to the other nothing was talked of but the prodigious exploits of *Charles* and his Generals, and of the old regiments that fought under them at *Narva*, *Duna*, *Crassau*, *Pultusk* and *Hollofin*. From hence the very lowest of the *Swedes* became animated with a spirit of emulation and glory, and their tenderness for their King, their compassion for his misfortunes, and their implacable aversion to the *Danes*, gave a new energy to that impression. In several other countries the peasants are slaves, or treated as such; but here they make a figure



in the state, are looked upon as citizens, and form to themselves sentiments of honour and grandeur; so that, in short, these forces became in a little time the best troops of the north.

General *Steinbock*, by order of the Regency, put himself at the head of 8000 old troops, and 12000 of the new ones, to go in pursuit of the *Danes*, who ravaged all the country about *Elfsingborg*, and had already put some distant places under contribution.

There was neither time nor opportunity to clothe the militia with military habits. Most of these boors came in their flaxen frocks, having pistols tied to their girdles with cords. *Steinbock*, at the head of this extraordinary army, came up with the *Danes* within three leagues of *Elfsingborg*, on the 10th of *March*, 1710. He was minded to rest his troops some days, to intrench himself, and give these new soldiers time to be acquainted with the enemy: but all the peasants called out to fight at the very moment of their arrival.

Some officers who were there told me, they saw them foam almost to a man with rage; so excessive is the national hatred of the *Swedes* to the *Danes*. *Steinbock* took the advantage of this disposition, which, in a day of battle, is of as much service as military discipline. The *Danes* were attacked, and one might have seen what perhaps is not to be parallel'd by two more instances of the like kind, raw forces equal in the first onset to the intrepidity of the old regiments. Two regiments of these undisciplined peasants cut the regiment of the King of *Denmark's* guards in pieces, and left but ten men remaining.



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The *Danes* being entirely routed, made their retreat under the cannon of *Elfsingborg*. The passage from *Sweden* to *Zeeland* is so short that the King of *Dennark* received the same day, at *Copenhagen*, the news of his army's defeat in *Sweden*, and sent his fleet to bring off the remains of his troops. The *Danes* quitted *Sweden* with precipitation five days after the battle, but being unable to bring away their horses, and not caring to leave them to the enemy, they killed them all in the parts about *Elfsingborg*, and set fire to their provisions, burning their corn and baggage, and leaving 4000 wounded at *Elfsingborg*, the greatest part of whom died by the infection they received from so many dead horses, and for want of provision, which their own countrymen deprived them of, to prevent its falling into the hands of the *Swedes*.

At the same time the peasants of *Dalecarlie*, having in the midst of their forests heard say, that their King was prisoner in *Turky*, sent a deputation to the Regency of *Stockholm*, and offered to go at their own expence, to the number of 20000 men, to deliver their Master out of the hands of his enemies. This proposal, which, tho' of no significance, shewed the courage and loyalty of the proposers, was heard with pleasure, notwithstanding it was rejected. Nor did they fail to give the King an account of it, when they sent him the particulars of the battle of *Elfsingborg*.

King *Charles* received this comfortable news in his camp at *Bender*, in *July* 1710, and in a little time after another accident confirmed him in his hopes.

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The Grand Visir *Couprougly*, who opposed his designs, was turned out after he had been two months in the Ministry. *Charles* the XIIth's little court, and those who still adhered to him in *Poland*, gave out that he made and deposed the Visirs, and governed the *Turkish* empire from his retreat at *Bender*. But he had no hand in that Favourite's ruin. The rigid probity of the Visir was the only cause of his fall. His predecessor was used to pay the Janisaries not out of the Imperial treasury, but out of such money as he got by extortion. *Couprougly*, on the other hand, paid them out of the treasury. Upon this *Achmet* reproached him with preferring the interest of the subject to that of the Emperor. Your predecessor for *Chourlouly*, said he, could find other ways and means to pay my troops. The Grand Visir answered, *If he had the art to enrich your Highness by rapine, it is such a one as I esteem it an honour to be ignorant of.*

The great secrecy that reigns in the Seraglio, rarely suffers such discourses to creep abroad. But this was known with *Couprougly's* disgrace. That Visir's freedom did not cost him his head, because true virtue often draws respect even from those who are displeased with it. He had leave to retire to the island of *Negropont*.

After this the Grand Signior sent to *Aleppo* for *Baltagi Mahomet*, Basha of *Syria*, who had been Grand Visir before *Chourlouly*. The *Baltagi's* of the Seraglio, so called from *Balta*, which signifies an ax, are slaves employed to cut wood for the use of the Princes of the blood, and the Sultanas. The Visir had been a *Baltagi* in his youth, and had ever since retained the name, according



According to the custom of the *Turks*, who are not ashamed to take the name of their first profession, of their father, or the place of their nativity.

At the time that *Baltagi Mahomet* was a servant in the Seraglio, he had the good fortune to do Prince *Achmet* some small piece of service, that Prince being then a prisoner of state in the reign of his brother *Mustapha*. Now it is a custom in the Seraglio, that the Princes of the *Ottoman* blood should have for their pleasure some women who are past child-bearing, (which is very nearly the case of the *Turkish* women) and yet agreeable enough to please. One of these female slaves, who had been much beloved by *Achmet*, he gave in marriage upon his being made Sultan, to *Baltagi Mahomet*. This woman, by her intrigues, made her husband Grand Visir. Another intrigue deposed him, and a third made him Visir again.

*Baltagi Mahomet* had no sooner received the seals of the empire, than he found the King of Sweden's interest prevailing in the Seraglio. The Sultana Valide, *Ali Coumourgi* the Grand Signior's favourite, the *Kislar Aga* chief of the black Eunuuchs, and the Aga of the Janisaries, were for war against the Czar. The Sultan was determined upon it, and the very first order he gave the Grand Visir, was to go and fall upon the *Moscovites* with 200000 men. *Baltagi Mahomet* had never been in the field, but then he was by no means an idiot, as the *Swedes* out of pure hatred have represented him. He told the Grand Signior, upon receiving from his hand a sabre set with precious stones, Your Highness knows that I've been brought up to use an ax and fell wood, and



and not to wield a sword and command armies. I will endeavour to serve you in the best manner I am able, but if I fail of success, remember that I have intreated you not to lay it to my charge. The Sultan assured him of his good will, and the Visir prepared to obey him.

The first step of the *Ottoman Porte* upon this occasion, was to imprison the *Moscovite* Ambassador in the castle of seven towers. It is the custom of the *Turks* to begin with seizing the Ministers of those Princes against whom they declare war. Tho' strict observers of hospitality in every thing else; in this they violate the most sacred law of nations. And yet it is under a pretence of equity that they act thus unjustly, imagining or being willing to have it believed, that they never undertake any war but what is just, because consecrated by the approbation of the *Mufti*. Upon this principle they look upon themselves as armed to chastise the infringers of treaties, which they often break themselves, and think the Ambassadors of Kings in enmity with them are to be punished as accomplices in the treachery of their masters.

To this may be added, the ridiculous contempt they affect towards Christian Princes and their Ambassadors, whom for the most part they look upon only as Consuls of Merchants.

The Han of *Crim Tartary*, whom we call the *Kam*, had orders to be in readiness with 40000 *Tartars*. This Prince reigns over *Nogai*, *Bondgiac*, part of *Circassia*, and all the *Crim* country known to antiquity by the name of *Taurica Chersonesus*, whither the *Greeks* carried their commerce and their arms, building large cities there, and



and whither the *Geneose* have since penetrated, when they were masters of the trade of *Europe*. In this country are to be seen the ruins of some *Grecian* Cities, and some monuments of the *Geneose* still subsisting in the midst of ruin and desolation.

The Kam is by his own subjects called Emperor; but notwithstanding this grand title, he is mere slave of the *Porte*. The *Ottoman* blood, of which the Kams are descended, and the right they have to the *Turkish* empire upon the extinction of the Grand Signior's race, makes their family be respected, and their persons formidable, even to the Sultan himself. It is upon this account that the Grand Signior dares not destroy the race of the Kams of *Tartary*: But he hardly ever suffers any of them to continue upon the throne to an advanced age. Their steps are always watched by the neighbouring *Bashas*; their territories incompassed with *Janisaries*; their inclinations crossed by the Grand Visir; and their designs ever suspected. If the *Tartars* complain of the Kam, the *Porte* deposes him; if he is beloved by them, it is a crime, for which he is sooner punished than the other. Thus all of them, in a manner, pass from the crown into banishment, and finish their days at *Rhodes*, which most commonly is both their prison and their grave.

The *Tartars* their subjects are the greatest thieves of any people upon the face of the earth, and yet, which is hardly to be conceived, they are at the same time the most hospitable. They travel fifty leagues out of the country to fall upon a caravan, and destroy towns; but if any stranger happens to pass thro' their country, he is not only received



received and lodged every where, and his expenses born for him; but whatever place he comes to, the inhabitants strive who shall have the honour to make him their guest. The master of the house, his wife and daughters, are ready to quarrel who shall attend upon him. The *Scythians*, their ancestors, transmitted to them this inviolable regard to hospitality: and they still retain it because the small number of strangers that travel thro' their country, and the low price of all kind of provisions, makes this virtue no ways burdensome to them.

When the *Tartars* go to war in conjunction with the *Ottoman* army, they are maintained by the Grand Signior, but receive no other pay except their booty. This makes them better at pillage, than a regular engagement.

The Kam gained by the presents and intrigues of the King of *Sweden*, got leave that the general rendezvous of the troops might be at *Bender* under the eyes of *Charles XII.* to let him see the better, that it was for his sake the war was undertaken.

The new Visir, *Baltagi Mahomet*, not being under the same engagements, would not flatter a foreign Prince so far. He recalled the order, and this great army was drawn together partly at *Belgrade*, and partly at *Adrianople*.

The *Turkish* troops are not at this time so formidable as they have been, when they conquered so many Kingdoms in *Asia*, *Africa*, and *Europe*. Then they triumphed over enemies less robust and worse disciplined than themselves by strength of body, and the valour and number of their men. But now that the Christians understand the art



of war better, they scarce ever fail to beat the *Turks* in a pitch'd battle, even when their forces are unequal. If the *Ottoman* empire has lately gained some conquests, it is only upon the republic of *Venice*, esteemed more wise than warlike, defended by strangers, and ill supported by Christian Princes, who are always divided among themselves.

The Janisaries and Spahis always make their ranks in disorder, are never under command nor able to rally. Their cavalry which should be excellent, considering the goodness and agility of their horses, cannot sustain the shock of the German cavalry. The infantry, in like manner, cannot use the bayonet at the end of the fusée to advantage. Besides, the *Turks* have had no great general among them since *Couprougly*, who conquered the isle of *Candia*. A slave brought up in idleness and the silence of a Seraglio, made a *Visir* against his interest, and a General against his inclinations, headed a raw army, without experience and without discipline, against *Moscovite* troops, exercised in war for twelve years together, and proud of having conquered the *Swedes*.

The Czar, in all appearance, must have vanquished *Baltagi Mahomet*, but he committed the same fault in regard to the *Turks*, that the King of *Sweden* was guilty of in his case; that is, he too much despised his enemy. Upon the news of the *Turkish* preparations, he left *Moscow*; and having given orders to turn the siege of *Riga* into a blockade, he drew up his army to the number of 80,000 men, upon the frontiers of *Poland*. With this army he marched to *Moldavia* and *Wallachia*, formerly the country of the *Daci*, but now



now inhabited by *Greek* Christians, tributaries to the Grand Signior.

A *Greek* named *Cantemir*, made Prince of *Moldavia* by the *Turks*, joined the Czar, who he already looked upon as conqueror, and made no scruple to betray the Sultan of whom he held his principality, for the sake of a Christian Prince from whom he expected much greater advantage. The Czar entered into a secret alliance with him, received him into his army, and marching up the country, arrived in *June* 1711, at the northern side of the river *Hierasus*, now *Pruth*, near *Jassy*, the capital of *Moldavia*.

As soon as the Grand Visir received the news that *Peter Alexiowitz* was come thither, he immediately left the camp at *Belgrade*, and following the course of the *Danube*, proposed to pass that river on a bridge of boats near *Saccia*, the very same place where *Darius* formerly built a bridge that bore his name. The *Turkish* army marched with so much expedition, that they soon came in sight of the *Moscovites*, the river *Pruth* being between them.

The Czar, sure of the Prince of *Moldavia*, little thought the subjects would fail him. But the *Moldavians* are often in a different interest from that of their master. They liked the *Turkish* government, which is never fatal to any but the *Grandeess*, and affects a lenity to people who are its tributaries. They feared the Christians, especially the *Moscovites*, who had upon all occasions used them barbarously. They brought all the provisions to the *Ottoman* army. The undertakers, who had engaged to furnish the *Moscovites* with provisions, performed their promise to the Grand



Grand Visir, tho' it was made to the Czar. The *Walachians*, whose country adjoins to that of *Moldavia*, shewed the same regard to the *Turks*; to such a degree had the remembrance of former cruelties alienated their minds from the *Moscovites*.

The Czar, thus frustrated of his hopes, which perhaps he had inconsiderately entertained, found his army on a sudden destitute of provisions, and without forage. In the mean time the *Turks* crossed the river that separated them from the enemy. All the *Tartars*, according to custom, swam over it, holding by the tail of their horses. The *Spahis*, which are the *Turkish* horse, did the same, because the bridges were not ready time enough.

At length the whole army being got over, the Visir pitched a camp, and fortified it with trenches. It is strange the Czar should not dispute the passage of the river, or at least repair this fault, by engaging the *Turks* immediately, instead of giving them time to tire out his army with fatigue and famine. But that Prince seems in this campaign, to have taken all the steps that could lead to his ruin. He found himself without provisions, with the river *Pruth* behind him, and near 150000 *Turks* before him, and about 40000 *Tartars* continually harassing him on the right-hand and the left. Reduced to this extremity, he said publicly, "I am at least in as bad a case as my brother Charles was at *Pultowa*."

The indefatigable Count *Poniatofsky*, agent to the King of *Sweden*, was in the Grand Visir's army with some *Poles* and *Swedes*, who all thought the Czar's ruin inevitable.



As soon as *Poniatosky* saw that the armies must infallibly engage, he sent an express to the King of *Sweden*, who set out that moment from *Bend* followed by forty Officers, and enjoying by anticipation the pleasure of fighting the Emperor of *Moscovy*. After many a loss, and several destructive marches, the Czar was driven back upon the *Pruth*, and had no cover left but some *chevaux de frise*, and some waggons. A party of Janisaries and Spahis fell immediately upon the army in that defenceless condition, but they did it in a tumultuous and disorderly manner; and were received by the *Moscovites* with a resolution which nothing but despair and the Presence of their Prince could inspire.

The *Turks* were twice repulsed. But the day following, *M. Poniatosky* advised the Grand Vizier to starve out the *Moscovite* army, who, being destitute of all provision, would, in a day's time be obliged, together with their Emperor, to surrender at discretion.

The Czar has since that time more than once acknowledged, that in all his life he never felt much uneasiness as he did that night. He revolved in his mind all that he had been doing, for so many years, for the glory and good of his nation; that so many great designs, perpetually interrupted by successive wars, were now in all probability going to perish with him, before they were brought to perfection; that he must either die with hunger, or engage near 200,000 men with feeble troops, less by half the number than when they first set out; a cavalry almost dismounted, and the foot worn out with famine and fatigue.



About the beginning of the night he called General *Czeremetof* to him, and gave him a peremp-  
tory order to get every thing ready by break of  
day, to charge the *Turks* with bayonets at the  
muzzle of their muskets.

He gave express orders also to burn all the bag-  
gage, and that no Officer should keep above one  
waggon; that in case of a defeat, the enemy  
however might not get the booty they expected.  
Having settled every thing with the General  
in order to the battle, he retired into his tent full  
of grief, and seized with convulsions, a distem-  
per he was often troubled with, and which came  
upon him with double the violence when he was  
under any great uneasiness. He forbid all persons  
to enter his tent in the night, upon any pretence  
whatsoever, not caring to have any remonstrances  
made to him against a desperate but necessary re-  
solution, and much less that any one should be a  
witness of the melancholy condition he was in.

In the mean time the greatest part of his bag-  
gage was burnt according to his order, and all  
the army followed the example, tho' with much  
regret; but some buried such of their things  
as were most valuable. The General Officers  
had already given orders for the march, and en-  
deavoured to inspire the army with a courage  
which themselves wanted: but the soldiers, quite  
exhausted with fatigue and hunger, marched  
without spirit and without hope; and yet, to  
conserve their courage still more, had their ears  
filled with the shrieks and cries of women, of  
whom there was too great a number in the ar-  
my. Every one expected death or slavery to be  
their portion the next morning. What is here  
related



related is no exaggeration, but is literally the account that was given by some Officers who served in the army.

There was at that time in the *Moscovite* camp a woman as extraordinary perhaps as the Czar himself. She was then known only by the name of *Catharine*. Her mother was a poor country woman, named *Erb-Magden*, of the village of *Ringin* in *Estonia*, a province where the people held by villenage, and which was at that time under the dominion of *Sweden*. She never knew her father, \* but was baptized by the name of *Martha*, and registered among the bastard-children. The Vicar of the parish out of pure charity brought her up till she was fourteen years of age, and then she went to service at *Mariembourg* where she lived with a Lutheran Minister, whose name was *Gluk*.

At the age of eighteen she married a *Swedish* dragoon in 1702. The day after her marriage, a party of the *Swedish* troops were beat by the *Moscovites*, and the dragoon who was in the action never appeared afterwards, nor could she learn whether he was taken prisoner, nor ever after get any account of him.

Some days after she was taken prisoner herself, and became a servant to General *Czeremet*, who gave her to *Menzicof*, a man who has experienced the vicissitudes of fortune in both extremes, being from a pastry-cook's boy made a General and a Prince, and after that deprived of all, and banished to *Siberia*, where he died overwhelmed with misery and despair.

\* I have since been assured that the Father of the *Czarina* was a Ditcher.



The Czar was at supper with Prince *Menzicof* when he first saw her and fell in love with her. In 1707, he married her privately, not that she used any artifice to delude him, but because he found in her an astonishing capacity, and a greatness of soul capable of forwarding his designs, and even of continuing them after him. He had long since put away his first wife *Ottekesa*, daughter of *Boiard*, upon a charge of adultery, and also of opposing the changes he had made in the empire; which last was the greater crime of the two in the eyes of the Czar. He would have no body in his family that thought differently from himself. In this foreign slave he expected to meet with all the qualities of a Sovereign, though she wanted every virtue of her sex. For her sake he scorned the common prejudices, by which none but little souls are influenced, and caused her to be crowned Empress. The same great capacity, which made her *Peter's* wife, gave her the empire after the death of her husband; and *Europe* was seen with surprise, a bold woman, who could neither write nor read, supply the want of strength and education by spirit and bravery, and fill with glory the throne of a Legislator.

Upon her marriage with the Czar, she renounced the *Lutheran* Religion, in which she was born, for that of *Moscovy*, and was baptized according to the rites of the *Russian* church, instead of *Martha* assuming the name of *Catharine*, by which she has been known ever since. This woman, being in the camp at *Pruth*, held a private council with the general officers, and *Shaffirof* the Vice-Chancellor, while the Czar was in his tent.

K

They



They agreed, that it was necessary to sue for peace to the *Turks*, and that the *Czar* must be persuaded into the proposal. The Vice-Chancellor wrote a letter to the Grand Visir, in the name of his Master, which the *Czarina*, notwithstanding the Emperor's prohibition, carried into the tent to him; and after much dispute, having prevailed upon him by her prayers and tears to sign it; she took all her money and jewels, and every thing of value that she had about her, together with what she could borrow of the general officers, which in all amounted to a considerable present, and sent it with the *Czar's* letter, to *Osman Aga*, Lieutenant to the Grand Visir. *Mahomet Baltagi* answered haughtily with the air of a Visir and a conqueror, "Let the *Czar* send me his first Minister, and I will see what is to be done." The Vice-Chancellor *Shaffirof* came immediately with a present in his hand, which he offered publickly to the Grand Visir. It was considerable enough to let him see they stood in need of him, but too little for a bribe.

The Grand Visir's first demand was, That the *Czar*, with all his army, should surrender at discretion. The Vice-Chancellor made answer, that his Master designed to give him battle within a quarter of an hour, and that the *Moscovites* would all be cut in pieces, rather than submit to such dishonourable conditions. *Osman* seconded *Shaffirof* with fresh remonstrances.

*Mahomet Baltagi* was no soldier. He knew the Janisaries had been repulsed the day before, and was easily persuaded by *Osman* not to pass with certain advantages for the hazard of a battle. He immediately granted a suspension of arms for



six hours, and in that time the terms of the treaty were agreed upon and settled.

During the parley there happened an accident, which shews the word of a *Turk* is often more to be depended on than we imagine. Two *Italian* Gentlemen, related to Mr. *Brillo*, Lieutenant Colonel of a regiment of grenadiers in the Czar's service, going to look for forage, were taken by the *Tartars*, who carried them to their camp, and offered to sell them to an Officer of the Janissaries. The *Turk* enraged at such a breach of the truce, seized the *Tartars*, and carried them himself before the Grand Visir, together with the two prisoners.

The Visir sent the gentlemen back that moment to the Czar, and ordered the principal *Tartars* concerned in carrying them off to be beheaded.

In the mean time the Kam of *Tartary* opposed the conclusion of a treaty, which took from him all hopes of pillage. *Poniatosky* seconded him with very urgent and pressing reasons. But *Osman* carried his point notwithstanding the impatience of the *Tartar*, and the insinuations of *Poniatosky*.

The Visir thought it enough for his master the Grand Signior to conclude an advantageous peace. He insisted, that the *Moscovites* should give up *Asoph*, burn the galleys that lay in that port, and demolish the important citadels upon the *Palus Maotis*; that the Grand Signior should have all the cannon and ammunition of these fortresses; that the Czar should draw off his troops from *Poland*, and give no farther disturbance to the few *Cossacks* that were under the protection of the



the *Poles*, nor to those that were subject to *Turky*; and that for the future she should pay the *Tartars* a subsidy of 40000 sequins *per annum*, an odious tribute long since imposed, but from which the Czar had delivered his country.

At length the treaty was going to be signed without so much as mentioning the King of *Sweden*: And all that *Poniatosky* could obtain from the *Visir*, was to insert an article, by which the *Moscovite* should promise not to obstruct or incommode the return of *Charles XII.* and which is pretty remarkable, it was stipulated in this article, that peace should be concluded between the Czar and the King of *Sweden*, if they were so disposed, and could agree upon the terms of it.

On these conditions the Czar had liberty to retreat with his army, cannon, artillery, colour and baggage. The *Turks* furnished him with provisions, and there was plenty of every thing in his camp within two hours after the signing of the treaty, which was begun, concluded and signed the 21st of *July 1711.*

Just as the Czar, rescued from the difficulty he was under, was drawing off with drum beating, and ensigns displayed, came the King of *Sweden*, impatient of fighting, and eager to see his enemy in his hands. He had rid post above fifty leagues, from *Bender* to *Jazy*, and lighting at Count *Poniatosky's* tent, the Count came up to him with a sorrowful countenance, and acquainted him, by what means he had lost an opportunity, which perhaps he would never recover.

The King enraged went directly to the *Grand Visir*, and with an air of indignation upbraided him



him with the treaty he had concluded. I have authority says the Grand Visir with a calm aspect, to wage war and to make peace. But, replies the King, have not you the whole *Moscovite* army in your power? Our law, says the Visir with great gravity, commands us to grant our enemies peace, when they implore our mercy. Ah! replies the King in a violent emotion, does it order you to clap up a bad treaty when you are in a capacity to make what terms you please? Was it not in your power to carry the Czar prisoner to *Constantinople*?

The *Turk* finding himself so briskly attacked answered very coldly, and who shall govern his empire in his absence? It is not fit that all Kings should be out of their kingdoms. *Charles* replied with a smile full of indignation, and then threw himself down upon a *Sopha*, and looking upon the Visir with an air of resentment and contempt, he stretched out his leg towards him, and entangling his spur in his robe, which he did by design, tore it; then rose up immediately, mounted his horse, and returned to *Bender* full of despair.

*Poniatofsky* continued some time longer with the Grand Visir, to try if he could not prevail upon him by softer methods to make some better terms with the Czar; but it being then prayer-time, the *Turk* without giving one word of answer, went to wash and attend his devotions.

*The End of the Fifth Book.*



THE  
HISTORY  
OF  
CHARLES XII.  
KING of SWEDEN.  
BOOK VI.

THE CONTENTS.

*Intrigues at the Porte. Negotiation between King Augustus and the Tartars. The Kam of Tartary and the Basba of Bender endeavour to force Charles to be gone. He defends himself with forty domesticks against the whole Army. He is taken.*

**F**ORTUNE, which before had been so favourable to the King of Sweden, bore hard upon him now even in the most trifling things. At his return he found his little camp at Bender, and all his apartment under water, caused by an inundation of the *Neister*. He retired to some miles distance, near a Village called *Varnitza*; and as if he had had some secret presage of the  
Event



Event that he was afterwards to experience, he built a large house of stone there, capable, upon occasion, of sustaining an Assault for some hours. He furnished it also in a very magnificent manner, contrary to his custom, but in order to keep the *Turks* more in awe.

Besides this, he built two more, one for his Chancery, and the other for his favourite *Grothusen*, who kept a table at his expence. While the King was thus employed in building at *Bender*, as if he had designed to continue always in *Turkey*, *Baltagi Mahomet*, being more apprehensive than ever of the intrigues and complaints of this Prince at the Porte, had sent the Emperor of Germany's Resident to *Vienna*, to procure a passage for the King of *Sweden* through the hereditary territories of the house of *Austria*. This Envoy came back in three weeks time, with a promise from the Imperial Regency, that they would pay *Charles XII.* all due honours, and conduct him safely into *Pomerania*.

The reason why the Regency were applied to, was, because *Charles* who had succeeded *Joseph* in the imperial Dignity was then in *Spain* disputing the right of the crown with *Philip V.* While the German Envoy was executing this commission at *Vienna*, the Grand Visir sent three *Bashas* to the King of *Sweden*, to acquaint him that he must be gone out of the territories of the *Turkish* Empire.

The King, who knew what they came about, sent them word, that if they ventured to make any proposal contrary to his honour, or to fail in their respects towards him, he would hang them all three up the same hour. The *Basha* of *Thessalonica*



*Salonica*, who delivered the message, disguised the roughness of his commission under the most respectful terms. *Charles* dismissed the audience without vouchsafing one word of answer; but his Chancellor *Mullern*, who staid with the three *Baschas*, signified his Master's refusal to them in a few words, which was nothing but what they had already perceived by his silence.

The Grand Visir however was not discouraged: he ordered *Ismael Bascha*, the new *Serasquier* of *Bender*, to threaten the King with the Sultan's resentment, if he did not immediately come to a resolution. The *Serasquier* was a person of a sweet and winning temper, which had gained him King *Charles's* good-will, and the friendship of all the *Swedes*. The King entered into a conference with him, but it was only to let him know, that he would not depart till *Achmet* had granted him two things, one of which was to punish the Grand Visir, and the other to furnish him with 100000 men in order to return into *Poland* at the head of them.

*Baltagi Mahomet* was very sensible, that *Charles's* stay in *Turky* was only to ruin him. For this reason he placed a guard upon all the roads from *Bender* to *Constantinople*, with orders to intercept the King's letters. Besides this he retrenched his *Thaim*, i. e. the provision which the *Porte* allows the Princes to whom she grants an asylum in her dominions. That of the King of *Sweden's* was prodigious, amounting to five hundred crowns a day in money, besides a vast excess of every thing that could contribute to maintain a court in plenty and splendor.



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As soon as the King heard that the Visir had ventured to retrench his allowance, he turned to the Steward of his household, and said, *You have had but two tables hitherto, I command you to prepare four to morrow.*

Charles the XIIth's Officers had been used to find nothing impossible which their master ordered: But having neither money, nor provision, they were forced to borrow at twenty, thirty, and forty *per cent.* of the Officers, Domesticks and Janisaries, who were grown rich by the King's liberality. M. *Fabricius*, the Envoy of *Holstein*, gave all that he had; but these supplies would not have sufficed for the space of a month, if one *Motraye* a Frenchman, who had been upon a long voyage in the *Levant*, and was come to *Bender* out of curiosity to see the King, had not offered to go through all the *Turkish* guards, to borrow money in the King's name at *Constantinople*.

What Letters he had to carry, he put into the cover of a book, having first torn out the past-board, and passed through the midst of the *Turks* by the name of an *English* merchant, with his book in his hand, saying it was his Prayer-book. The *Turks* are not very suspicious because not much acquainted with the world. The supposed Merchant arrived at *Constantinople* with the King's letters. But the foreign Merchants did not care to venture their money. One *Cooke*, an *Englishman*, was the only person who could be prevailed upon; and he readily offered the loan of about 100000 franks, content to lose them if any misfortune happened to the King of *Sweden*, and sure to make his fortune if that Prince lived.



The *French Gentleman* had the good fortune to carry the money safe to the camp at *Varnitza* and it came just as they were beginning to despair of it.

In the mean time *M. de Poniatosky* wrote, and that from the camp of the Grand Visir, an account of the campaign of *Pruth*, wherein he accused *Baltagi Mahomet* of cowardice and treachery. This account he entrusted to an old Janissary enraged at the Visir's weakness, and moreover gained by *Poniatosky's* presents, and having obtained permission to leave the camp, he went and presented the letter with his own hands to the Sultan.

*Poniatosky* set out from the camp some days after, and went to the *Ottoman Porte* to cabal against the Grand Visir as usual.

All circumstances seemed to favour the design. The Czar, now at liberty, was in no haste to perform his promises. It is customary for Princes to send golden keys to the Sultan, when they deliver up any towns to the *Turks*. The keys of *Asoph* were not come, and the Grand Visir, who was responsible for them, being apprehensive of his Master's resentment, durst not appear in his presence.

The old Visir *Chourlouly*, then in banishment at *Mitylene*, thought this a proper opportunity to deprive *Achmet* of the throne, and set up *Ibrahim* the Son of *Soliman*, a young Prince who was at that time a prisoner of state in the Seraglio, together with his cousin *Mahmoud*.

To bring about this design, it was necessary that *Mahomet Baltagi* should be prevailed upon to endeavour to make the Sultan satisfied with the Treaty



Treaty stipulated with the Czar, and that *Baltagi* should march directly up to *Constantinople* with the Janisaries.

*Mahomet* had no inclination to any rash and hazardous enterprizes; so the old Visir applied himself to *Osman Aga* his Lieutenant, who entirely governed him. But the letters being intercepted *Chourlouly* and *Osman* were beheaded, which is reckoned an infamous punishment in *Turky*, and their heads were thrown into the hall of the Divan. Among *Osman's* treasures were found the Czarina's ring, and 20000 pieces of gold in *Saxon*, *Polish* and *Moscovite* coin.

As to *Baltagi Mahomet*, he was banished for having been chosen to be the Instrument of *Chourlouly* and *Osman's* plot, though he never had any such intention. *Lemnos* was appointed for the place of his exile, and there he died three years after. The Grand Signior did not seize upon his estate at his death, because he did not die rich; which may serve for a proof, that the Czar had not bought his peace at an immense price, as it was reported in *Europe*.

To this Grand Visir succeeded *Jussuf*, that is *Joseph*, whose fortune was no less singular than that of his predecessor's. He was by birth a *Moscovite*, and being taken prisoner by the *Turks* at six years of age, together with his family, had been sold to a Janisary. He was long a servant in the Seraglio, but in time became the second person in the empire where he had been a slave. But he was only the shadow of a Minister. The young *Seliotar Ali Coumourg*i raised him to this slippery post, in hopes of filling it himself; and *Jussuf* his creature had nothing else to do, but to



set the seal of the empire to what the Favourite desired. The Politicks of the *Ottoman* court seemed to take a new turn in the beginning of this Visir's ministry. The Czar's Plenipotentiaries, who resided at *Constantinople* both in the quality of Ministers, and also as Hostages, were better treated than ever. The Grand Visir confirmed the peace of *Pruth* with them. But that which mortified the King of *Sweden* more than any other circumstance, was the account which he received, that the secret alliance made at *Constantinople* with the Czar was effected by the mediation of the *English* and *Dutch* Ambassadors.

*Constantinople*, after *Charles's* retreat to *Bender*, was become what *Rome* has often been, the center of the Negotiations of Christendom. Count *Desalleurs*, the *French* Ambassador at the *Porte*, was employed in supporting the interests of *Charles* and *Stanislaus*: the Emperor of *Germany's* Minister in opposing them. The *Swedish* and *Moscovite* factions clashed, as those of *France* and *Spain* have long done at the court of *Rome*.

*England* and *Holland* appeared as neuters, but were not so. The new trade, which the Czar had opened at *Petersburg*, had an influence on the views of those two trading nations.

The *English* and *Dutch* are always for the Prince that favours their traffick most, and the Czar's was then a very advantageous branch of trade; so that it is no wonder the *English* and *Dutch* Ministers should operate privately for him at the *Porte*. One of the conditions of this new alliance was, that *Charles* should be sent immediately out of the *Turkish* dominions. Perhaps the Czar was in hopes of seizing his person upon the



the road, or else he thought *Charles* less formidable at home than in *Turky*, where he was always ready to raise the *Ottoman* arms against the *Russian* empire.

The King of *Sweden* was perpetually soliciting the *Porte* to send him back thro' *Poland* with a numerous army. The *Divan* indeed were determined to send him back, but it was only with a guard of seven or eight thousand men, not as a King they were disposed to succour, but as a guest they were desirous to be rid of. With this view *Sultan Achmet* wrote him the following Letter.

Most powerful among the Kings that worship *Jesus*, Redressor of wrongs and injuries, and Protector of Right in the Ports and Republicks of south and north; shining in Majesty, lover of Honour and Glory, and of our sublime *Porte*, *Charles* King of *Sweden*, whose Enterprizes may God crown with Success.

AS soon as the most illustrious *Achmet*, formerly *Chiaoux Pachi*, shall have the honour to deliver you this Letter adorned with our Imperial seal, be persuaded and convinced of the truth of our intentions contained therein, viz. That though we had designed to send our ever victorious army against the *Czar* a second time; yet that Prince, to avoid our just resentment at his delaying the execution of the treaty concluded on the banks of *Pruth*, and renewed again at our sublime *Porte*, having surrendered into our hands the castle and city of *Asoph*, and having endeavoured by the mediation of the *English* and *Dutch* Ambassadors, our ancient



cient allies, to cultivate a lasting peace with us, we have granted his request, and delivered his Plenipotentiaries, who remain with us as hostages, our imperial ratification, having first received his from their hands.

We have given our inviolable and salutary orders to the most honourable and valiant Delvet Gherai Han of Boudgiak in Crim Tartary, Noghai and Circassia, and to Ismael our sage Counsellor and noble Serasquier of Bender, (whom God preserve and augment their magnificence and wisdom) for your return through Poland, according to your first design, which has again been laid before us in your name. You must prepare therefore to set forward the next winter, under the guidance of Providence, and with an honourable guard, in order to return to your own territories, taking care to pass through Poland in a peaceable and friendly manner.

You shall be provided with every thing necessary for your journey by my sublime Porte, as well money as men, horses and waggons. But we advise and exhort you above all things, to give the fullest and most express orders to all the Swedes and other persons in your retinue, not to make any havoc, or to be guilty of any action that may either directly or indirectly tend to break this peace and alliance.

Hereby you will preserve our good will, of which we shall endeavour to give you as great and frequent proofs as we shall have opportunities. The troops designed to attend you, shall receive orders agreeable to our imperial intentions in this particular.

Given at our sublime Porte of Constantinople the 14th of the month Rebyul Eureb, 1124. which answers to the 19th of April, 1712.

This



This letter did not put the King of *Sweden* entirely out of hopes. He wrote the Sultan word, that he should always acknowledge the favours his Highness had heaped upon him; but he added, that he thought the Sultan too just to send him away with no other guard than that of a flying camp, into a country already overrun with the Czar's troops. Indeed the Emperor of *Moscow*, notwithstanding he was obliged by the first article of the treaty of *Pruth* to draw all his forces out of *Poland*, had sent fresh ones thither; and it seems strange the Grand Signior should know nothing of it.

But the bad policy and vanity of the *Porte*, in suffering the Christian Princes to have their Ambassadors at *Constantinople*, and never keeping so much as a single agent in any Christian court gives the latter an opportunity of penetrating into, and sometimes of directing the most secret resolutions of the Sultan, and occasions the Divan to be always ignorant of the most publick transactions in the Christian world.

The Sultan shut up in the Seraglio among his women and his eunuchs, sees only with the eyes of the Grand Visir. That Minister, as inaccessible as his Master, taken up with the intrigues of the Seraglio, and having no correspondence abroad, is for the most part imposed upon himself, or deceives the Sultan, who deposes or orders him to be strangled for the first offence, in order to choose another as ignorant or as treacherous as the former, who behaves like his predecessors, and falls as soon as they.

Such, for the most part, is the negligence and inactivity of this court, that if the Christian Prin-

ces



ees were to join in a league against the *Porte*, their fleets would be at the *Dardanelles*, and their army at the gates of *Adrianople*, before the *Turks* could think of putting themselves in a posture of defence. But the different interests that divide *Christendom* will preserve that people from a fate, for which they seem at present to be ripe by their want of policy, and their ignorance in war and maritime affairs.

*Achmet* was so little acquainted with what passed in *Poland*, that he sent an *Aga* to see whether the *Czar's* forces were still there or not. Two Secretaries of the King of *Sweden*, who understood the *Turkish* language, accompanied the *Aga* in order to confront him in case of a false report.

This *Aga* saw the forces with his own eyes, and gave the Sultan a true account of the matter. *Achmet* in his rage was going to strangle the Grand *Visir*; but the Favourite who protected him, and thought he might have occasion for him, obtained his pardon, and kept him some time longer in the Ministry.

The *Moscovites* were openly protected by the *Visir*, and underhand by *Ali Coumourg*, who had changed sides. But the Sultan was so provoked; the infraction of the treaty was so manifest, and the *Janisaries*, who often make the Ministers, Favourites and Sultans themselves tremble, called out so loudly for war, that no body in the *Seraglio* durst offer at a more moderate opinion.

The Grand Signior immediately committed the *Moscovite* Ambassadors, already as much used to go to prison as an audience, to the seven towers. War was declared afresh against the *Czar*, the horse-tails displayed, and orders given



all the Bashas to raise an army of 200000 fighting men. The Sultan himself quitted *Constantinople*, and fixed his court at *Adrianople*, in order to be nearer the seat of the war.

In the mean time a solemn embassy from *Austria* and the Republick of *Poland* to the Grand Signior was upon the road at *Adrianople*. At the head of this embassy was the Palatine of *Massovia* with a retinue of above 300 persons.

These were all seized and imprisoned in the suburbs of the city. Never was the *Swedish* party fuller of hopes than upon this occasion: but these great preparations came to nothing, and all their expectations were disappointed.

If a publick Minister of great wisdom and foresight, then residing at *Constantinople*, is to be credited, young *Coumourgi* had other things in his head besides hazarding a war with the Czar to gain a desert country. He had thoughts of taking *Peponnesus*, now called the *Morea*, from the *Venetians*, and making himself master of *Hungary*.

To put his great designs in execution, he wanted nothing but the office of Prime Visir, for which he was yet thought too young. In this view it was of more Importance to him to be the Czar's ally than his enemy. It was neither his interest nor his inclination to keep the King of *Sweden* any longer, much less to raise an army of *Turks* for him. He was not only for sending that Prince away, but also declared openly, that no Christian Minister ought hereafter to be permitted to reside at *Constantinople*: that the common Ambassadors were only honourable spies, who corrupted or betrayed the Visirs, and had too long influenced the intrigues of the Seraglio; that the



the *Franks* settled at *Pera*, and in the towns upon the *Levant*, were Merchants, who had occasion for a Consul only, and not an Ambassador. The Grand Visir, who owed both his dignity and his life to the Favourite, and was besides afraid of him, complied with his intentions, and the more readily, because he had sold himself to the *Moscovites*, and hoped to be revenged of the King of *Sweden*, who would have ruined him. The Mufti, *Ali Goumourgi's* creature, was also a slave to his humour. He had given his vote for a war against the Czar, when the Favourite was on that side of the question; but as soon as this young Man changed his opinion, he declared against it as an unjust motion. Thus the army was scarcely raised, when they hearkened to proposals for an accommodation. The Vice-Chancellor *Shaffirof* and young *Czeremetof*, the Czar's plenipotentiaries and hostages at the Porte, promised after several negotiations that the Czar should draw his troops out of *Poland*. The Grand Visir, who was sensible the Czar would not execute this treaty, was resolved however to sign it; and the Sultan content with giving laws to the *Moscovites* tho' only in appearance, continued still at *Adrianople*. Thus, in the space of less than six months peace was ratified with the Czar, then war declared, and afterwards peace renewed again.

The main article in all these treaties related to the removal of the King of *Sweden*. The Sultan would not injure his own honour and that of the *Ottoman* empire, so far as to expose the King to the danger of being taken upon the road by his enemies. It was stipulated that he should be sent away, but on condition that the Ambassador



of *Poland* and *Moscovy* should be responsible for the security of his person; and those Ambassadors swore in the name of their Masters, that neither the Czar, nor King *Augustus*, should molest him in his passage, and *Charles* on the other hand was not to endeavour to raise any commotions in *Poland*. The Divan having thus determined *Charles's* fate, *Ismael Serasquier* of *Bender* repaired to *Warnitza*, where the King was encamped, and acquainted him with the resolutions of the *Porte*, giving him to understand in a civil manner, that there was no time to delay, but that he must be gone.

*Charles* made no other answer than this, that the Grand Signior had promised him an army, and not to guard; and that Kings ought to keep their word.

In the mean time General *Fleming*, King *Augustus's* Minister and Favourite, maintained a private correspondence with the Kam of *Tartary* and the *Serasquier* of *Bender*. A German Colonel, whose name was *la Mare*, had more than once journeyed from *Bender* to *Dresden*, to carry messages backward and forward between the Kam and *Fleming*; and King *Augustus* had several times been heard to say, in speaking of *Charles*, *I keep my Bear tied at Bender*.

At this very time the King of *Sweden* caused a Courier sent from *Fleming* to the *Tartarian* Prince, to be seized upon the frontiers of *Wallachia*. The letters were carried to him and deciphered. There appeared plain marks of a correspondence between the *Tartars* and the Court of *Dresden*; but the terms were so general, and ambiguous, that it was difficult to say, whether King *Augustus's* design was to draw off the *Turks* from the *Swedish* party, or to persuade the Kam to deliver



live up *Charles* to his *Saxons* as he attended him on the road to *Poland*.

'Tis hard to conceive, that so generous a Prince as *Augustus*, for the sake of seizing the King of *Sweden's* person, would venture the lives of Ambassadors, and 300 *Polish* Gentlemen detained at *Adrianople*, as hostages for the security of *Charles*.

On the other hand, *Fleming*, absolute over his Master, was known for a man of but loose principles, and one that scrupled nothing. The King of *Sweden's* treatment of *Augustus* had been such as might be thought an excuse for any method of revenge. And if the Court of *Dresden* could believe it no hard matter to purchase the liberty of the *Polish* hostages at the *Ottoman Porte*.

These reasons were bandied between the King, *Mullern* his Chancellor, and *Grothusen* his favourite. They read the letters again and again, and the unhappy situation they were in, increased their suspicions, they resolved to believe the worst.

Some days after the King was confirmed in his suspicions by the precipitate departure of Count *Sapieha*, who had fled to him for refuge, and now left him abruptly in order to go for *Poland*, and there throw himself into the arms of *Augustus*. Upon any other occasion he would have looked upon *Sapieha* only as a malecontent, but at this nice juncture he made no scruple to believe him a traitor. The repeated instances, that had been made to him to be gone, raised his suspicions to certainty. The positiveness of his temper, joined to all these probabilities, made him continue firm in the opinion that there was a design to betray him and deliver him up to his enemies, notwithstanding the plot has never yet been proved.



He might be mistaken in thinking King *Au-*  
*gustus* had made a bargain with the *Tartars* for his  
person; but he was much more so in depending  
upon the assistance of the *Ottoman* court. But be  
that as it will, he resolved to gain time.

He told the *Basha* of *Bender*, that he could not  
go till he was in a condition to pay his debts.  
For tho' his *Thaïm* had for a long time been re-  
gularly paid, his generosity had always forced  
him to borrow. The *Basha* asked him, how  
much he wanted? The King answered at a ven-  
er, a thousand purses; which amounts to  
500000 livres of *French* money full weight.  
The *Basha* wrote to the *Porte* about it; and the  
*Sultan* instead of 1000 purses granted him 1200,  
which he sent to the *Basha* with the following  
letter.

The Grand Signior's letter to the *Basha* of  
*Bender*.

THE design of this Imperial Letter is to let you  
know, that upon your representation and re-  
quest, and upon that of the right noble *Delvet Ghe-*  
*rai Han*, to our sublime *Porte*, our Imperial muni-  
ficence has granted the King of Sweden a thousand  
purses, which shall be sent to *Bender* under the tare  
and custody of the most illustrious *Mahomet Basha*,  
formerly *Chiaoux Pachi*, to remain in your hands  
till such time as the King of Sweden sets out, whose  
steps God direct, and then to be given him with  
two hundred purses more, as an overplus of our Im-  
perial liberality beyond what he desires.

As



*As to the rout of Poland, which he is resolv'd to take, you and the Han, who are to attend him, shall be careful to take such prudent and wise measures, as may, during the whole passage, preserve the troops under your command, and those of the King of Sweden, from committing any havock, doing any other thing that may be thought a violation of the peace subsisting between our Sublime Porte, and the Kingdom and Republick of Poland, so that the King of Sweden may go as a Friend under our Protection.*

*By doing this, (which you are to desire of him on positive terms) he will receive all the honour and respect that is due to his Majesty from the Porte, as we have been assured by the Ambassadors of King Augustus and the Republick, who also on this condition have offered themselves and several others of the Polish Nobility, if required, as hostages for the security of his passage.*

*At the time that you and the right noble Del Gherai shall agree upon for the march, you shall put yourself at the head of your brave soldiers, among whom shall be the Tartars, with the Han at the head of them, and shall conduct the King of Sweden and his men.*

*And may it please the only God, the Almighty, direct your steps and theirs. The Basha of Asso shall continue at Bender, with a regiment of Spahis and another of Janisaries, to defend it in your absence. Now by following our Imperial Orders and Intentions in all these Points and Articles, you will deserve the continuance of our Imperial Favour, well as the praise and recompence due to all such who observe them.*



## CHARLES XII. 227

Given at our imperial Residence at Constantinople the 2d day of the month Cheval 1124 of the Hegira.

Before the Grand Signior's answer arrived, the King had written to the Porte, to complain of the supposed treachery of the Kam. But the passages were well guarded, and the Ministry was against him, so that his letters never came to the Sultan. Nay, the Visir would not suffer M. Des-alleurs to come to *Adrianople*, where the Porte then was, lest that Minister, who was the King of Sweden's Agent, should endeavour to disconcert their design of sending him away.

Charles enraged to see himself in a manner hunted out of the Grand Signior's territories, resolved not to stir a step.

He might have desired to return thro' the German territories, or take ship at the *Black Sea* in order to go to *Marseilles* through the *Mediterranean*. But he chose rather to ask nothing, and wait the event.

When the 1200 purses were arrived, his Treasurer *Grothusen*, who by residing so long in Turkey had learnt to speak the language, went to wait upon the Basha without an Interpreter, in hopes to get the 1200 purses from him; and afterwards to form some new intrigue at the Porte; easily imagining, as they always did, that the Swedish party would at length arm the Ottoman empire against the Czar.

*Grothusen* told the Basha, that the King's equipages could not be got ready without money. But we, says the Basha, shall defray all your expences.



pences. Your Master will be at no charge, while he continues under my protection.

*Grothusen* replied, that the difference between the *Turkish* equipages, and those of the *French* was so great, that they were under a necessity of applying to the *Swedish* and *Polish* artificers at *Varnitza*.

He assured him that his Master was willing to go, and that this money would facilitate and hasten his departure. The too credulous *Basha* gave him the 1200 purses, and within a few days came and desired the King in a very respectful manner to give orders for their departing.

But he was extremely surprized, when the King told him he was not ready to go, and that he wanted a thousand purses more. The *Basha*, confounded with this answer, was speechless for some time, and then went to a window, where he was seen to shed some tears. Afterwards, turning to the King, I shall lose my head, says he, for having obliged your Majesty. I have given you the 1200 purses against the express order of my Sovereign. With these words he took his leave and was going away full of grief.

The King stopped him, and told him he would make an excuse for him to the Sultan. Ah! replies the *Turk*, as he was going out, My Master can punish faults, but not excuse them.

*Ismael Basha* went to acquaint the Kam of *Tartary* with the news. The Kam having received the same order with the *Basha*, not to suffer the 1200 purses to be delivered before the King's departure, and having consented to the delivery of them, was as apprehensive of the Grand Signior's resentment as the *Basha* himself. They wrote



both of them to the *Porte* to clear themselves, and protested that they had not parted with the 200 purses, but upon a solemn promise made to them by the King's Minister, to be gone immediately. And they intreated his Highness not to impute the King's refusal to their disobedience.

Charles persisting in the notion that the Kam and the Bascha designed to deliver him up into the hands of his enemies, ordered M. Funk, his Envoy at the *Ottoman* court, to lay his complaints against them before the Grand Signior, and to ask for 1000 purses more. His extreme generosity, and the little account he made of money, hindered him from seeing that there was something base and mean in this proposal. But he did it with a view to be refused, and that he might have a fresh pretence for not departing. But a man must be reduced to strange extremities, before he can stand in need of such artifices. *Savari*, his interpreter, a crafty enterprizing man, carried his letter to *Adrianople*, in spite of the Grand Visir's care to keep the passages strictly guarded.

Funk was forced to deliver this dangerous message; and all the answer he received was to be clapt up in prison. The Sultan, in a passion, called an extraordinary Divan, and, which is very rarely done, spoke himself upon the occasion. His speech, according to the translation then made of it, was as follows:

"I scarce ever knew the King of *Sweden* but by his defeat at *Pultowa*, and the request he made to me to grant him a sanctuary in my empire. I have not, I believe, any need of him, nor any reason to love or fear him; yet,  
L "without



“ without consulting any other motives than the  
 “ hospitality of a *Mussulman*, and my own ge-  
 “ nerosity, which sheds the dew of its favour  
 “ upon the great as well as the little, upon stran-  
 “ ers as well as my own subjects, I have receiv-  
 “ ed and assisted him, his Ministers, Officers and  
 “ Soldiers in every respect, and for three years  
 “ and a half have never held my hand from load-  
 “ ing him with presents.

“ I have granted him a very considerable guard  
 “ to conduct him into his own country. He  
 “ has asked for 1000 purses to defray some ex-  
 “ pences, though I pay them all. Instead of  
 “ 1000 I have granted him 1200. After getting  
 “ these out of the hands of the *Serasquier* of Be-  
 “ der, he desires 1000 more, and refuses to go  
 “ under a pretence that the guard is too little  
 “ whereas it is but too large to pass through the  
 “ country of a friend and ally.

“ I ask you then, whether it be a breach  
 “ the Laws of hospitality to send this Prince  
 “ away, and whether foreign Princes ought to ac-  
 “ cuse me of cruelty or injustice, in case I should  
 “ be obliged to make him go by force?” All the  
 Divan answered, that the Grand Signior might  
 lawfully do what he had said.

The Mufti declared that the *Mussulmans* are  
 not bound to hospitality towards Infidels, much  
 less towards the ungrateful, and he granted him  
*Fetfa*, a kind of mandate, which for the most part  
 accompanies the important orders of the Grand  
 Signior. These *Fetfas* are revered as oracles, than  
 the persons from whom they come are as much  
 the Sultan's slaves as any others.

The Order and the *Fetfa* were carried to Be-



by the *Bouiouk Imraour*, Grand Master of the Horse, and a *Chiaous Basba*, first Usher. The Basba of *Bender* received the order at the Kam's, from whence he went immediately to *Varnitsa*, to know whether the King would go away in a friendly manner, or force him to execute the Sultan's orders.

Charles XII. not used to this threatening language could not command his temper. Obey your master, says he to the Basba, if you dare, be gone out of my presence. The Basba went off in a rage, with a full gallop, contrary to the manner of the *Turks*; and meeting *Fabritius* by the way, he called out to him without stopping, the King won't hearken to reason; you'll see strange things presently. The same day he continued the supply of the King's provisions, and removed the guard of Janisaries. He sent also to the *Poles* and *Cosaques* at *Varnitsa*, to let them know, that if they had a mind to have provisions, they must leave the King of Sweden's camp, and come and put themselves under the protection of the *Porte* at *Bender*. They all obeyed, and left the King, with only the Officers of his household, and 300 *Swedes*, to cope with 10000 *Tartars* and 6000 *Turks*; and now there was no more provision in the camp either for man or horse.

Immediately the King gave orders to shoot plenty of the fine *Arabian* horses the Grand Signior had sent him, saying, I will neither have provisions nor their horses. This made a noble feast for the *Tartars*, who, as all the world now, think horse-flesh delicious feeding. In



the mean time the *Turks* and *Tartars* invested the little camp on all sides.

The King, with all the calmness in the world, appointed his 300 *Swedes* to make regular fortifications, and worked at them himself. His Chancellor, Treasurer, Secretaries, *Valet de Chambre* and all his domesticks, put their hands to the work. Some barricadoed the windows, others fasten'd Beams behind the doors in the form of buttresses.

When the house was well barricadoed, and the King had taken a view of his supposed fortifications, he sat calmly down to chess with his favourite *Grothusen*, as if every thing had been perfectly safe and secure. It happened very luckily that *Fabricius*, the Envoy of *Holstein*, did not lodge at *Varnitsa*, but at a Village between *Varnitsa* and *Bender*, where Mr. *Jeffreys*, the English Envoy to the King of *Sweden*, resided also. The two Ministers, seeing the storm ready to break out, took upon them to be mediators between the *Turks* and the King. The King and especially the *Basha* of *Bender*, who had no inclination to offer any Violence to the Monarch, were glad to receive the offers the two Ministers made them. They had two conferences together at *Bender*, at which the Usher of the Seraglio, and the Grand Master of the horse, were brought the Sultan's order and the Mufti's Fetters assisted.

Monsieur *Fabricius* \* declared to them, that the *Swedish* Majesty had great reason to believe that

\* This whole Account is related by M. *Fabricius* in his Letters.



designed to deliver him to his enemies in *Poland*. The Kam, and Basha, and the rest, laying their hands upon their heads, called God to witness, that they detested such a horrible piece of treachery, and would lose the last drop of their blood rather than suffer the least failure of respect to the King in *Poland*. They added, that they had the *Moscovite* and *Polish* Ambassadors in their hands, whose lives should answer for the least affront that should be offered the King of *Sweden*. In a word, they complained bitterly that the King should entertain such injurious suspicions of persons, who had so generously received and so handsomely treated him. And though oaths are often the language of treachery, M. *Fabricius* suffered himself to be persuaded by these barbarians. He thought he perceived such an air of truth in their protestations, as falsehood never imitates but imperfectly. He was sensible there was a correspondence between the Kam of *Tartary* and King *Aurustus*; but yet he remained convinced that the design of that negotiation was only to force *Charles XII.* to retire out of the territories of the Grand Signior. But whether *Fabricius* was mistaken or not, he assured them, he would represent to the King the injustice of these Jealousies; but do you intend to force him to be gone? *adds he.* Yes, says the Basha, such is our Master's order. Then he desired them to consider once again, whether that order was to spill the blood of a crowned Head? Yes, replies the Kam with some warmth, if that crowned Head disobeys the Grand Signior in his own dominions.

In the mean time every thing being ready for the assault, *Charles's* death seemed inevitable: But



the Sultan's command being not positively to kill him in case of resistance, the *Basha* prevailed upon the *Kam* to let him send an express that moment to *Adrianople*, where the Grand Signior then was, to receive his Highness's last orders.

*M. Jefferys* and *M. Fabricius*, having procured this little respite, ran to acquaint the King with it. They came with that expedition which people usually make who bring good news, but were received very coldly: He called them voluntary and unauthorized mediators, and still insisted that the Sultan's order and the *Mufti's Fetfa* were forged, because they had sent for fresh orders to the *Porte*.

The *English* Minister withdrew, resolving to concern himself no more with the affairs of so inflexible a Prince. *M. Fabricius*, beloved by the King, and more used to his humour than the *English* Minister, staid with him, in order to conjure him not to hazard a life so precious upon so unnecessary an occasion.

The King, instead of an answer, shewed him his fortifications, and desired him to be a mediator only so far as to procure him provisions. Leave was easily obtained from the *Turks* to let provisions pass to the King's camp, till such time as the courier should arrive from *Adrianople*.

The *Kam* himself had forbid his *Tartars*, tho' always impatient of pillage, to make any attempt upon the *Swedes* till a new order came, so that *Charles* went sometimes out of his camp with forty horse, and rode through the midst of the *Tartarian* troops, who very respectfully left him a free passage: Nay he marched directly up their lines,



lines, and instead of resisting, they opened to him.

At length the Grand Signior's order being come, to put to the sword all the *Swedes* that should make the least resistance, and not to spare the life of the King, the *Basha* had the civility to shew *Fabricius* the order, to the intent that he might try his utmost to prevail upon *Charles*. *Fabricius* went immediately to acquaint him with this bad news. Have you seen the order you speak of? *says the King*. I have, *replies Fabricius*. Tell them then, *says the King*, that this order is a second forgery of theirs, and that I will not go. *Fabricius* fell at his feet, put himself in a passion, and reproached him with his obstinacy; but all was to no purpose. Go back to your *Turks*, *says the King to him smiling*, if they attack me, I know how to defend myself.

The King's chaplains also fell upon their knees before him, conjuring him not to expose the wretched remains of *Pultowa*, and, above all, his own sacred Person to certain death; adding besides, that resistance in this was a most unwarrantable action, and that it was a violation of the laws of hospitality, to resolve to continue with strangers against their will, who had so long and generously supported him. The King, who had shewed no resentment against *Fabricius*, grew warm upon this occasion, and told his priests, that he took them to pray for him, and not to give him advice.

General *Hord* and General *Dardoff*, whose opinion it had always been not to venture a battle, which in the consequence must prove fatal, shewed the King their breasts, covered with wounds



they received in his service; and assuring him, that they were ready to die for him, begged that it might at least be upon a more necessary occasion. I know, *says the King*, by your wounds and my own, that we have fought valiantly together. You have hitherto done your duty: do it again now. There was nothing more to be said; they must obey. Every one was ashamed not to court death with the King. His Majesty, being prepared for the assault, entertained himself in secret with the pleasure and honour of sustaining the shock of a whole army with 300 Swedes. He appointed every man to his post. His Chancellor *Mullern*, the Secretary *Empreus*, and his Clerks, were to defend the Chancery-house. Baron *Fief*, at the head of the Officers of the kitchen, was at another post. The Grooms of the stables and the Cooks had another place to guard. For with him every man was a soldier. He rode from his fortifications to his house, promising rewards to every body, creating Officers, and declaring, that he would make the lowest of his servants Captains, if they behaved with courage in the engagement.

It was not long before they saw the *Turks* and *Tartars* advancing in order of battle to attack the little fortress, with ten pieces of ordnance and two mortar-pieces. The horse-tails waved in the air, the clarions sounded, the cries of *Alla, Alla*, were heard on all sides. Baron *Grothusen* took notice that the *Turks* did not mix any abusive language against the King in their cries, but only called him *Demir-Bash*, which signifies *head of Iron*, and resolved that moment to go alone and unarmed out of the fortifi-



fortifications. He advanced up to the line of the Janisaries, who had almost all of them received money from him. "Ah, what my friends! *says* he to them in their own language, are you come to massacre 300 defenceless Swedes? You brave Janisaries, who have pardoned 100000 Moscovites upon their crying *Amman*, (i. e. Pardon) to you: Have you forgot the kindness you have received from us? And would you assassinate that great King of Sweden, whom you loved so much, and who has been so generous to you? My friends, he asks but three days, and the Sultan's orders are not so strict as you are made to believe."

These words produced an effect which *Grothusen* himself did not expect. The Janisaries swore upon their beards, they would not attack the King, and that they would give him the three days he demanded. In vain was the signal given for the assault. The Janisaries far from obeying, threaten to fall upon their Leaders, if three days were not granted to the King of Sweden. They came to the Basha of *Bender's* tent in a body, crying out that the Sultan's orders were forged. To this unexpected insurrection the Basha had nothing to oppose but patience.

He made as if he was pleased with the generous resolution of the Janisaries, and ordered them to retreat to *Bender*. The Kam of *Tartary*, who was a hot forward man, would have given the assault immediately with his troops; but the Basha, who did not design the *Tartars* alone should have the honour of taking the King, when he perhaps might be punished for the disobedience



of his Janisaries, persuaded the Kam. to wait till the next day.

The Basha returning to *Bender*, assembled all the Officers of the Janisaries and the oldest Soldiers, and both read to them, and shewed them the positive order of the Sultan, and the *Musti's Fetfa*.

Sixty of the oldest of them, with venerable gray beards, who had received a thousand presents from the King's hand, offered to go in person to him, and intreat him to put himself into their hands, and permit them to serve him as guards.

The Basha consented to it; for there was no expedient he would not try, rather than be forced to kill the King. Accordingly these sixty old Soldiers went the next morning to *Varnitsa*, having nothing in their hands but long white staves, the only arms of the Janisaries, when they are not going to fight: For the *Turks* look upon it as a barbarous custom among the Christians to wear swords in time of peace, and enter armed into their churches and the houses of their friends.

They addressed themselves to Baron *Grothusen* and Chancellor *Mullern*: They told them they were come with a design to serve as faithful guards to the King; and that, if he pleased, they would conduct him to *Adrianople*, where he might speak to the Grand Signior in person. While they were making this proposal, the King read the letters that were brought from *Constantinople*, and which *Fabricius*, who could not see him any more, had conveyed privately to him by a Janisary. These letters were written by

Count



Count *Poniatosky*, who could neither serve him at *Bender* nor *Adrianople*, having been detained at *Constantinople*, by order of the *Porte*, from the time of the imprudent demand of the 1000 purses. He told the King, that the Sultan's orders to seize or massacre his Royal Person, in case of resistance, were but too true; that the Sultan indeed was imposed upon by his Ministers; but the more he was imposed upon in this affair, the more he would be obeyed; that he must submit to the times, and yield to necessity: that he took the liberty to advise him to try if it were possible to prevail upon the Ministers by way of negotiation; and not to be inflexible in a case where the softest methods were required; and to expect from time and good management the cure of an evil which by rough and violent handling wou'd be increased beyond the hopes of a recovery.

But neither the proposal of the old Janisaries, nor *Poniatosky's* letters, could in the least convince the King that it was possible for him to give way without injuring his honour. He chose rather to die by the hand of the *Turks*, than be in any manner their prisoner. He dismissed the Janisaries without seeing them, and sent them word, that if they did not go about their business, he'd shave their beards for them; which, in the East, is reckoned the most provoking affront that can be offered.

These old Soldiers, fired with resentment, returned home crying, as they went: Ah this head of iron! Since he's resolved to perish, let him perish. They gave the *Basha* an account of their commission, and acquainted their comrades at *Bender*, with the strange reception they had



met with. Upon this every one swore to obey the Bascha's orders without delay; and they were now as impatient of going to the assault as they had been averse to it the day before.

The word was given that moment. They march'd up to the intrenchments. The *Tartars* were already waiting for them, and the cannon began to play.

The *Janisaries* on one side, and the *Tartars* on the other, forced this little camp in an instant. Twenty *Swedes* had scarce time to draw their swords, before the whole 300 were surrounded and taken prisoners without resistance. The King was then on horseback between his house and his camp, with the Generals *Herd*, *Dardoff* and *Sparre*; and seeing that all his soldiers had suffered themselves to be taken before his eyes, he said in cool blood to those three officers, Let us go and defend the house. *We'll fight*, adds he with a smile, *pro aris & focis*.

Immediately he gallops up to the house with them, where he had placed about forty domesticks as centinels, and which they had fortified in the best manner they could.

These Generals, however accustomed to the obstinate intrepidity of their Master, could not help being surprized, that in cool blood, and with a jesting air, he should resolve to stand out against ten pieces of cannon and a whole army. They followed him with some guards and domesticks, to the number of twenty persons.

But when they came to the door, they found it beset with *Janisaries*. Besides, near 200 *Turks* or *Tartars* had already got in at a window, and made themselves masters of all the apartments, except a  
great



great hall, whither the Kings domesticks had retired. It happened lucklily that this hall was near the door, at which the King purposed to enter with his little troop of twenty persons. He threw himself off his horse with pistol and sword in hand, and his followers did the same.

The Janisaries fell upon him on all sides, being encouraged by the Basha's promise of eight ducats of gold to each man that should but touch his clothes, in case they could take him. He wounded and killed all who came near him. A Janisary, whom he had wounded, clapp'd his blunderbuss to his face, and if the arm of a *Turk* had not jostled him, occasioned by the crowd, that moved backwards and forwards like waves, the King had been killed. The ball grazed upon his nose, and took off a piece of his ear, and then broke General *Hord's* arm, whose fate it was to be always wounded by his Master's side.

The King stuck his sword into the Janisary's breast, and at the same time his domesticks, who were shut up in the great hall, opened the door to him. He enters as swift as an arrow with his little troop, and in an instant they shut the door again, and barricade it with all they can find.

Thus was *Charles XII.* shut up in this hall with all his attendants, amounting to about threescore men, Officers, Guards, Secretaries, *Valet de Chambres* and domesticks of all kinds.

The Janisaries and *Tartars* pillaged the rest of the house, and filled the apartments. Come, *says the King*, let us go and drive out these barbarians! And putting himself at the head of his men, he, with



with his own hands, opened the door of the hall which faced his bed-chamber, goes into it and fires upon the plunderers.

The *Turks* loaden with booty, being terrified at the sudden appearance of the King, whom they had been used to reverence, threw down their arms, and leapt out of the window, or fled into the cellars. The King taking advantage of the confusion they were in, and his own men being animated with this piece of success, they pursued the *Turks* from chamber to chamber, killed or wounded those who had not made their escape, and in a quarter of an hour cleared the house of the enemy.

The King in the heat of the fight perceived two Janisaries who hid themselves under his bed. He thrust his sword through one of them and killed him; but the other asked pardon, crying, *Amman*. I grant you your life, says the King, upon condition that you go and give the *Basha* a faithful account of what you have seen. *Grothusen* explained the words in *Turkish* to him. The *Turk* easily promised to do as he was bid. Upon which he was allowed to leap out of the window, as the rest had done.

The *Swedes*, at length become masters of the house, shut the windows again, and barricadoed them. In this situation they had no want of arms, a ground-chamber full of muskets and powder, having escaped the tumultuous search of the Janisaries. These they made a very seasonable use of, firing close upon the *Turks* thro' the windows, and killing 200 of them in less than half a quarter of an hour.



The cannon played against the house; but the stones being very soft, it only made holes in the wall, but demolished nothing.

The Kam of *Tartary* and the Basha, who were desirous of taking the King alive, being ashamed to lose time and men, and employ an entire army against sixty persons, thought it proper to set fire to the house, in order to oblige the King to surrender. For this purpose they ordered some arrows, twisted about with lighted matches, to be shot upon the roof, and against the doors and windows; by which means the house was immediately in a flame. The roof all on fire was ready to tumble upon the *Swedes*. The King, with a very sedate air, gave orders to extinguish the fire; and finding a little barrel full of liquor, he laid hold of it himself, and, with the assistance of two *Swedes*, threw it upon the place where the fire was most violent: Then he discovered that it was full of brandy. But the hurry, which is inseparable from such a state of confusion, hindered him from thinking of it before. Upon this it burnt more furiously than ever: The King's apartment was consumed, and the great hall, where the *Swedes* then were, was filled with a terrible smoke, mixed with gusts of fire, that came in thro' the doors of the neighbouring apartments. One half of the roof fell in, and the other tumbled down without the house, cracking among the flames.

A centinel named *Walberg*, ventured in this extremity to cry, that there was a necessity for surrendring. What a strange man, says the King, is this, to imagine that it is not more glorious to be burnt than taken prisoner! Another centinel.



nel named *Rosen*, had the thought to say, that the Chancery-house, which was but fifty paces off, had a stone roof, and was proof against fire; that it would do well to sally out and gain that house, and there stand upon their defence. A true Swede, cries the King: Then he embraced him, and made him a Colonel upon the spot. Come on, my friends, says he, take all the powder and ball you can carry, and let us gain the Chancery sword in hand.

The *Turks*, who all this while encompassed the house, were struck with fear and admiration, to see that the *Swedes* continued in it notwithstanding it was all in flames. But they were much more surprized, when they saw them open the doors, and the King and his men fall upon them in a desperate manner. *Charles*, and his principal Officers were armed with sword and pistol. Every one fired two pistols at a time in the instant that the door opened; and in the twinkling of an eye throwing away their pistols, and drawing their swords, they drove the *Turks* back the distance of fifty paces; but the moment after this little troop was surrounded. The King, being booted according to custom, threw himself down with his spurs. Immediately one and twenty Janisaries fall upon him, disarm him, and bear him away to the *Basha's* quarters, some taking hold of his arms, and others of his legs, as the manner is to carry a sick person for fear of incommoding him.

As soon as the King saw himself in their hands, the violence of his temper, and the fury which so long and desperate a fight would naturally inspire, gave place to a gentle and calm behaviour. Not one impatient word fell from him; not a  
frown



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frown was to be seen. On the contrary he looked upon the Janisaries with a smiling countenance, and they carried him crying *Alla*, with a mixture of anger and respect in their faces. His Officers were taken at the same time, and stripped by the *Turks* and *Tartars*. It was on the 12th of *February*, 1713, that this strange adventure happened, and it drew after it some very extraordinary consequences.

*The End of the Sixth Book.*

THE



THE  
HISTORY  
OF  
CHARLES XII.

KING of SWEDEN.

BOOK VII.

The CONTENTS.

*The Turks remove King Charles to Demirtocca. King Stanislaus taken at the same time. A bold undertaking of M. de Villelongue. Revolution in the Seraglio. Battles in Pomerania. The Swedes burn Altena. Charles returns to his Kingdom. His strange manner of travelling. His arrival at Straelsund. The state of Europe at that time. The losses of King Charles. The successes of Peter the Great. And his triumphant entry into Petersburg.*

THE Basha of Bender gravely waited in his tent, expecting the King; and had by him one Marco for an Interpreter. He received the



the King with great respect, and prayed him to repose upon a Sopha, but the King took no notice of his civilities, and continued standing.

*Blessed be the Almighty, says the Basha, that your Majesty is safe.* It grieves me that you have forced me to execute the Sultan's orders. The King, for his part, was only vexed that his 300 men should suffer themselves to be taken in their intrenchments, and said, *Ah if they had fought like men, we could have held it out these ten days.* *Alas, says the Basha, what pity it is, that so much valour should be misemployed!* Then the King was conducted on a fine horse with rich furniture to Bender. All the Swedes were either killed or taken. The King's equipage, goods and papers, and the best of his baggage, was plundered or burnt. In the roads, the Swedish Officers naked, and chained two and two, followed the horses of the Tartars and Janisaries. The Chancellor and the General Officers were in the same condition of being slaves to some of the soldiers, to whose share they fell.

But the most unfortunate of all the prisoners was young *Federick*, the first Valet de Chambre to the King who had saved his life at *Pultowa*, and had the courage to assist Count *Poniatofsky* in carrying his Master three miles thro' the midst of his conquering enemies. *Federick*, in this action of *Bender*, maintained the reputation which he had first acquired at *Pultowa*. He fought by his Master's side, and was not taken till he had killed a dozen *Turks* with his own hand. He was said to be as strong a man as King *Augustus*; to these extraordinary gifts of nature in him was added an uncommon beauty, which occasioned his



his unhappy end. Several of the *Tartars* were disputing who should have him; and in the rage of battle and of an odious passion, not being able to agree, they fell upon the poor young man, and cut him in two with their sabres.

The *Basha Ismael*, having brought the King to his Seraglio at *Bender*, gave him his own apartment, where he was served like a King, but not without a guard of Janisaries at the chamber door. A bed was prepared for him; but he threw himself down upon a *Sopha* in his boots, and fell fast asleep. An Officer, that stood near in waiting, put him on a cap, which the King threw off at his first waking; and the *Turk* was surprized to see a sovereign Prince sleeping on the ground in his boots, and bare-headed. In the morning *Ismael* brought *Fabricius* to the King; who when he saw his Prince's clothes all torn, his boots, his hands, and his whole person covered with dust and blood; his eye-brows burnt, but yet even in that condition smiling; he threw himself on his knees, unable to speak: But soon recovering by the King's free behaviour, he renewed his usual way of conversation with him, and they began to be a little merry upon the subject of the battle. *I am told*, says *Fabricius*, *your Majesty has killed no less than twenty Janisaries*. No, no, says the King, *you know a story never loses in the telling*. While they were talking, the *Basha* brought to the King his Favourite *Grothusen* and Colonel *Ribbins*, whom he was so generous to redeem at his own expence. *Fabricius* undertook to ransom all the other prisoners.

*Jeffreys*, the *English* Envoy, assisted him with money: And *La Motraye*, a *French* Gentleman who



who came out of curiosity to *Bender*, and who has writ some account of these affairs, gave all he had. These strangers, assisted by the *Basha's* advice and money, redeemed all the Officers, and their clothes, out of the hands of the *Turks* and *Tartars*.

The next morning they conveyed the King in a chariot covered with scarlet towards *Adrianople*. His Treasurer *Grothusen* was with him. The Chancellor *Mullern*, and some Officers followed in another carriage. Many others were on horseback, who could not refrain tears at the sight of the King's chariot. The *Basha* himself commanded the convoy. *Fabricius* said it was a shame the King should be without a sword, and begged of the *Basha* that he might be allowed to wear one. *God forbid!* says the *Basha*, *he would soon cut our beards for us, if he had a sword.* However, he gave him one some hours after.

While they were carrying this King disarmed and a prisoner, who not long before had given law to so many countries, had been arbiter of the north, and the terrour of all *Europe*, there happened to appear in the very same place another instance of the frailty of human greatness.

King *Stanislaus* was seized in the *Turks* dominions, and carried prisoner to *Bender* at the same time that they were conveying *Charles* to *Adrianople*.

*Stanislaus*, unsupported by the hand that made him King, having no money, and consequently no friends in *Poland*, retired to *Pomerania*, and as he was not able to preserve his own kingdom, had done his best to defend his benefactor's.

He



He went himself to *Sweden* to hasten the recruits that were wanted in *Livonia* and *Pomerania*. At last, when he had done all that could be expected from him as the King of *Sweden's* friend, and struggled with his ill fortune, he thought it best to give up a crown which he was no longer able to keep. He advised about it with *Fleming* first Minister to King *Augustus*, who was under great obligations to him, and made him large promises, if not out of gratitude, at least for his honour's sake, or, which is the more probable, with intention only to deceive him.

But *Stanislaus* could not well abdicate his crown without the consent of *Charles*, to whom he owed it. So he wrote to him, to desire he would allow of an abdication, which many circumstances made necessary, and his good meaning in it honourable. He begged he would no longer sacrifice his interest for the sake of an unhappy friend, who would rather choose to be himself a sacrifice for the publick peace.

*Charles* received the letter at *Varnitsa*; and in a passion said to the Courier before a good many people: *Well, if he will not be a King, I shall think of somebody else.* *Stanislaus* thought if he should go himself it might do better. So he took with him Baron *Sparre*, who was afterwards the *Swede's* Ambassador in *France*. He changed his clothes, for fear of being known, and passed the borders of *Hungary* and *Transylvania*, still in fear of being stopped; nor could he think himself safe, till he came to *Yassi* in *Moldavia*, near the place where the Czar had such a narrow escape from the *Turks*. At *Yassi* he was stopped, and questioned. He said he was a *Swede*, and going to the  
King



King at *Bender* ; for he supposed that name was enough to gain his pass, little thinking what had happened.

Saying he was a *Swede*, they immediately seized him, and carried him prisoner to *Bender*. He was quickly known ; and word was brought of it to the *Basha* as he was going along with the King of *Sweden*. The *Basha* told *Fabricius*, who coming up to the chariot acquainted *Charles*, that he was not the only King a prisoner to the *Turks* ; and that *Stanislaus* was in hold a few miles from him. The King not at all discomposed, said to him, *Dear Fabricius, run and tell him, never to make peace with King Augustus, for we shall quickly have a change of affairs.* Such was his firmness of mind, that though deserted in *Poland*, attacked in his own dominions, and led prisoner here in *Turky*, he boldly reckoned upon fortune, not doubting but the *Ottoman Porte* would assist him with 100000 men.

*Fabricius* had leave to go with the message, attended by a *Janisary*. After some miles riding, he met a body of soldiers that guarded *Stanislaus*, and spoke to one that rode in the middle of them, in a *Frank's* dress, and indifferently mounted. He asked him in the *German* tongue, where the King of *Poland* was ? It proved to be *Stanislaus*, whom he did not know in that disguise. *What, says the King, have you forgot me ?* *Fabricius* then told him of the King of *Sweden's* sad condition, and of his unshaken, but unsuccessful resolution.

When *Stanislaus* came near *Bender*, the *Basha*, who was returning back from *Charles*, sent the King of *Poland* an *Arabian* horse with fine furniture.

*Stanislaus*



*Stanislaus* was received at *Bender* with a discharge of the artillery, and bating that he was prisoner, had no great cause to complain of his usage there. As for *Charles*, he was going to *Adrianople*, and the town was full of discourse beforehand about the battle. The *Turks* both admired and blamed him; but the Divan was so exasperated, that they threatned to confine him in one of the islands of the *Archipelago*.

M. *Desalleurs*, that could have taken his part and prevented such an affront to all the Kings of *Christendom*, was at *Constantinople*; and so was M. *de Poniatofsky*, who was never known to want contrivance upon any pressing occasion. Most of the *Swedes* at *Adrianople* were in prison, and the Sultan's throne seemed inaccessible to any complaints from the King of *Sweden*.

The Marquis *de Fierville*, a private agent from *France* to King *Charles* at *Bender*, was then at *Adrianople*, and undertook to do that Prince a piece of service when he was either deserted or ill used by all the world; he was luckily assisted in this design by a *French Gentleman*, of a good family, one *Villelongue* a man of great courage and but little fortune, who, charmed with the fame of the King of *Sweden*, was come thither on purpose to engage in his service.

With this young man's help M. *de Fierville* wrote a memorial as from the King of *Sweden*, demanding justice of the Sultan for the wrong offered in his Person to all crowned Heads, and against the real, or suspected treachery of the Kam and the Basha of *Bender*.

It contained an accusation of the Visir and other Ministers, that they were corrupted by the  
Moscovites,



*Moscovites*, had deceived the Grand Signior, had intercepted his letters, and had cunningly drawn from the Sultan an order so contrary to the hospitality of the Mussulmans, in violation of the law of nations, and in a manner so unworthy of a great Emperor, to attack with twenty thousand men a King who had none but his retinue to defend him, and who had depended upon the sacred word of the Sultan.

When they had drawn up this memorial, it was to be translated, and written upon a sort of paper that they never use but for what is presented to the Sultan.

They went to several *French* interpreters to get it done. But the King's affairs were so desperate, and the Visir so openly declared his enemy, that none of them all would undertake it. They found out a stranger at last whose hand was not known: who, for a good gratuity, and upon full assurance of secrecy, translated the memorial, and wrote it over upon the right sort of paper. The Baron *d'Arvidson*, a *Swedish* Officer, counterfeited the King's hand, and *Fierville* sealed it with the arms of *Sweden*. *Villelongue* undertook to deliver it to the Grand Signior as he passed to the mosque. This was no more than had been done before, by people who had complaints to make against the minister of state: but that made it now the more difficult and dangerous.

The Visir, who could not but think the *Swedes* would sue for justice to the Sultan, and knew withal what was like to follow, by the fate of his predecessors, forbade any person to come near the Grand Signior, and ordered, that whoever was seen about the mosque with petitions should be seized.

M

*Villelongue*



*Villelongue* knew the order, and that it was as much as his life was worth to do it. However, he put on a *Grecian* habit, and hiding the letter in his bosom, went pretty early to the place. He pretended madness, and danced between two files of Janisaries where the Sultan was to pass; and dropped some money now and then to amuse the guards.

When the Sultan was coming they would have had *Villelongue* got out of the way; but he fell on his knees, and struggled with the Janisaries. At last his cap fell off, and he was discovered by his hair to be a *Frank*. He had several blows, and was very ill used. The Grand Signior heard the scuffle, and asked what the matter was? *Villelongue* cried as loud as he could, *Amman! Amman! Mercy!* and pulled out the letter. The Sultan ordered him to be brought before him. *Villelongue* ran immediately, and embracing his stirrup, presented the paper, saying, *Sued Krall Dan. The King of Sweden gives it thee.* The Sultan, putting up the letter in his bosom, went on to the mosque, and *Villelongue* was secured in one of the out-houses of the Seraglio †.

The Sultan, coming from the mosque, when he had read the letter, resolved to examine the prisoner himself. He put off his Imperial habit and turban, and went in the disguise of an Officer of the Janisaries, which he often does, taking with him an old *Maltese* for an interpreter. By the favour of this disguise, *Villelongue* had a private conference of a quarter of an hour with the

† The Manuscripts of Mr. *de Fierville*, and Mr. *de Villelongue*, which are now in the Author's hands, confirm the Truth of this translation.



*Turkish* Emperor, an honour that was never done to any Christian Ambassador. He took care to relate all the King of *Sweden*'s hardships, accusing the Ministers, and demanding satisfaction: This he did with the greater freedom, because all the while he talked to the Sultan, he was thought to believe himself speaking to his equal. Not but he knew him well, though the prison was pretty dark; and this made him only the more bold in his discourse. The pretended Officer of the Janisaries said to *Villelongue*; Christian, be satisfied, the Sultan my Master has the soul of an Emperor, and if it be as you say, he will do your King justice. *Villelongue* was soon released, and some weeks after there was a sudden change in the Seraglio, which the *Swedes* affirm was owing to this conference. The Mufti was deposed. The Kam of the *Tartars* banished to *Rhodes*, and the Serasquier Basha of *Bender* sent to an island in the *Archipelago*.

The *Ottoman Porte* is so very subject to such humors, that it is hard to say, whether this was intended for satisfaction to the King of *Sweden* or not; his treatment shewed but little inclination in the *Porte* to pleasure him.

*Ali Coumourg*i, the Favourite, was thought to be at the bottom of all for some private ends of his own. The pretence for banishing the Kam and the Serasquier of *Bender*, was their giving the King twelve hundred purses against the express order of the Grand Signior. He raised the Son of the deposed Kam to the *Tartarian* Throne, a young man, who cared little for his father; and upon whose Assistance *Ali Coumourg*i greatly depended in the Wars he had already premeditated.



ed. It was some weeks after this, that the Grand Visir *Jussuf* was deposed, and that *Soliman Bassa* was declared Prime Visir.

I must say, that *M. de Villelongue*, and many *Swedes*, have assured me, that the letter he presented was the occasion of these changes; but *M. de Fierville* says quite otherwise: And this is not the only case in which I have met with differing accounts. Now I take it, an historian is to tell plain matter of fact, without entering into the motives: He is to relate exactly what he knows, and not to guess at what it is impossible he should know.

In the mean time *Charles* was carried to a little castle called *Demirtash*, near *Adrianople*, where multitudes of *Turks* were waiting to see him alight. He was conveyed out of the chariot to the castle upon a *Sopha*; but that he might not be seen, he put a cushion over his head.

It was several days before the *Porte* would consent to his residing at *Demotica*, a little town six leagues from *Adrianople*, near the famous river *Hebrus*, now called *Marizza*. At last *Coumourgi* said to *Soliman* the Grand Visir, Go, tell the King of Sweden he may stay at *Demotica* as long as he lives. I warrant he will be for removing before the year comes about; but be sure you do not let him have any money.

So the King was removed to *Demotica*, where the *Porte* allowed a sufficient quantity of provisions for him and his retinue, and only five and twenty crowns a day in money, to buy pork and wine, a sort of provision which the *Turks* never furnish to others. But as to the allowance of

five



five hundred crowns a day, which he had at *Bender*, it was quite withdrawn.

Before the King and his little court were well settled at *Demotica*, *Soliman* the Grand Visir was deposed, and succeeded by *Ibrahim Molla*, a man exceeding rough, and bold and blunt. It may not be amiss to give some account of him, that all the Viceroy's of that Empire may be known, on whom King *Charles's* fortune was so long depending.

He had been a common sailor till the accession of Sultan *Achmet* the third: Which Emperor would often go disguised like a common man, or as a Priest, or Dervis: And would slip in an evening into the coffee-houses and other publick places of *Constantinople*, to hear what was said of him, and how people stood affected. He over-heard this sailor once finding fault with the *Turkish* ships, that they never brought home any prizes, and swore, if he were a Captain, he would never come home without some ship or other of the Infidels. The very next morning the Grand Signior gave him a ship, and sent him a cruising. In a few days after, the Captain brought in a bark of *Malta*, and a *Genoese* galley, and in two years time he came to be Captain-General of the Sea, and at last Grand Visir. He was no sooner in his post, but he began to think he might do without the Favourite; and to make himself necessary, he promoted a war with the *Moscovites*. In order to this, he set up a tent near the castle where the King of *Sweden* lived.

There he invited the King to meet him with the new Kam of *Tartary* and the *French* Ambassador. The King's misfortunes made him the



more sensible of the indignity, to be sent for by a subject; so he ordered his Chancellor *Mullern* to go in his room: And because he did not know but the *Turks* might offer some affront to him, and force him to something below his dignity, this Prince, who carried every part of his conduct into extremes, resolved to keep his bed during his stay at *Demotica*. This he did for ten months as if he had been sick. None but the Chancellor, *Grothusen*, and Colonel *Dubens* ever eat with him. They had no conveniencies about them since the business of *Bender*, so that their meals were served with little elegance. They were forced to wait upon themselves, and the Chancellor *Mullern* was cook in ordinary the whole time.

While *Charles* kept his bed in this manner, he received news of the desolation of all his foreign dominions.

General *Steinbock*, famous for driving the *Danes* from *Scania*, and with a parcel of peasants, beating all their best troops, did still maintain the glory of the *Swedish* arms. He defended *Pomerania*, *Bremen*, and the King's possessions in *Germany*, as long as he was able, but could not hinder the *Saxons* and *Danes* united from passing the *Elbe*, and besieging *Stade*, a strong town near that river in the Dutchy of *Bremen*. It was bombarded and burnt to ashes, and the garrison obliged to surrender at discretion, before *Steinbock* could come in to their assistance.

He had about twelve thousand men, and half of them were Cavalry, with which he pursued the enemy, though they were twice his number, and forced them to repass the *Elbe*; and came up

with



with them at a place called *Gadebush*, near a river of that name, in the Dutchy of *Mecklenbourg*, on the 20th of *December* 1712. The *Saxons* and *Danes* were posted with a marsh before them, and a wood behind; and had all advantages both of number and situation: for there was no coming at them but over the marsh, through the fire of their artillery.

*Steinbock* led on his troops, and advancing in order of battle, began one of the most bloody engagements that had ever happened between those rival nations. After a sharp encounter of three hours, the *Danes* and *Saxons* were defeated and left the field.

It was here that a son of King *Augustus* by the Countess *de Konismarck*, known by the name of the Count of *Saxony*, received his first rudiments of the art of war; I mean him that had the honour to be chosen Duke of *Courland*, though without success, who wanted nothing but force to make good the most indisputable right that any man can have to dominion, which is the unanimous consent of a people. He commanded a regiment at *Gadebush*, and had a horse killed under him. I have heard him say, that all the *Swedes* maintained their ranks, and even when the day was decided, and their enemies dead at their feet, not one of those brave soldiers durst stoop to strip them, till prayers were over in the field of battle: they were so very exact in observing that strict discipline their King had always used them to.

After this victory, *Steinbock* could not but remember how the *Danes* had reduced *Stade* to ashes; and resolved to be revenged upon *Altena*,  
M 4 a town



a town belonging to the King of *Denmark*. *Altena* is below *Hamburg* upon the river *Elbe*, which brings up large vessels thither. The King of *Denmark* had granted to it great privileges, with an Intention to make it a place of considerable trade. With this encouragement, the people had so much improved their Trade and encreased their riches, as to make the *Hamburgers* jealous of their growing wealth, and begin to wish their destruction. When *Steinbock* came in sight of the place, he sent a trumpet to bid them evacuate it with their effects, for he was resolved to destroy their town immediately.

The magistrates came and threw themselves at his feet, and offered him a ransom of a hundred thousand crowns. *Steinbock* demanded twice the sum. They begged they might have time to send to their correspondents at *Hamburg*, and promised he should have it by the next day. The General told them if they did not pay it presently, he would burn the town about their ears.

The soldiers were in the suburbs ready with their torches; and the town had no defence but a poor wooden gate and a dry ditch; so that they were forced to fly at midnight. It was on the 9th of *January*, 1713. The season was extremely cold, and a violent north wind helped to spread the flames, and to encrease the sufferings of the people exposed in the open fields. Men and women loaded with their goods, went weeping and lamenting thro' the snow. Bed-ridden old people were carried by the young upon their shoulders. Women newly brought to bed escaped with their infants to die of cold upon the road,



road, in sight of their country that was all in flames. The *Swedes* set fire to the town, before the people were well got out of it. It burnt from midnight till about ten in the morning. The houses being most of timber were easily consumed, so that by morning there was scarce any sign remaining of a town.

The aged, the sick, and women of tender constitutions, who had lodged upon the ice while their houses were burning, came to *Hamburg*, and begged they might be let in to save their lives: But were refused, because *Altena* had been visited with some infectious distempers, and the inhabitants of *Altena* were not in such esteem with the *Hamburgers*, as to induce them to expose themselves to the infection of that unfortunate people by admitting them into the city. Thus most of these poor wretches died under the walls, calling Heaven to witness the barbarity of the *Swedes*, and more inhuman *Hamburgers*.

All *Germany* was scandalized at this proceeding. The ministers and generals of *Poland* and *Denmark* wrote to *Steinbock*, complaining of his cruelty, which being done without necessity, could have no excuse, but must set God and man against him.

His answer was, " That he had never carried  
 " things to these extremities, if it were not to  
 " deter his master's enemies from making war  
 " for the future like barbarians, and to teach  
 " them some regard to the law of nations: Add-  
 " ing, that they had filled *Pomerania* with their  
 " cruelties, and when they had ruined that beau-  
 " tiful country, they sold a hundred thousand  
 " people to the *Turks*; that his torches at *Altena*



“ were no more than just Reprisals for the red  
 “ hot bullets they had used at *Stade* : That war  
 “ was not the theatre of moderation and lenity :  
 “ That neither *Loüis* the XIVth, who allowed  
 “ the burning of the *Palatinate* ; nor *Turenne*  
 “ who had laid it in ashes ; nor those who had  
 “ followed and exceeded his example since, were  
 “ ever thought to be more barbarous than other  
 “ men ; and if there was any blame in such  
 “ things, it must lye upon the *Moscovites*, the  
 “ *Danes* and *Saxons*, who had set him the ex-  
 “ ample.”

On these terms of violence the *Swedes* and their enemies acted against each other ; and if *Charles* could but have appeared then in *Pomerania*, he might possibly have retrieved his former fortune. His armies, though they wanted his presence among them, were yet acted by his spirit ; but the absence of the chief has a fatal influence on military affairs, and prevents the right improvement of conquest. So that *Steinbock* lost by piece-meal all he had gained in those great actions, which at a better season might have been decisive.

With all his successes, it was not in his power to prevent the *Moscovites*, the *Saxons* and *Danes* from joining : They seized his quarters ; and he lost several of his men in little skirmishes : Two thousand of them were drowned in the *Eider*, as they were going to their winter quarters in *Holstein* : And these were losses not to be recovered in a country where he was surrounded on all sides by potent enemies.

*Frederick* Duke of *Holstein*, was then but twelve years old ; he was nephew to the King of *Sweden*,  
 and



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and son of that Duke who was killed at the battle of *Clisau*. His uncle the Bishop of *Lubeck*, under the name of Administrator, governed this unhappy country which its sovereigns have very seldom possessed in peace. The Bishop, who was anxious to avert war from the dominions of his pupil, was willing to preserve the appearance of a neutrality, but it was impossible to remain neuter between an army of the King of *Sweden*, whom the Duke of *Holstein* might hope to succeed, and that of the Allies, which was just upon the point to invade them.

Count *Steinbock* being hardly pressed, and in no condition to keep the field, demanded of the Bishop to admit him into the castle of *Tonnin-gen*, who was now reduced either to venture the loss of all the *Swedish* forces, or the consequences of the *Danes* resentment, in case he should assist them.

So he had recourse to art, the mean and dangerous refuge of weak minds, and ordered *Wolf* the Governor to receive the *Swedish* troops, but never to say any thing of such an order from him. *Steinbock* was also sworn to keep it secret.

*Wolf* was to take the blame of all upon himself, as having disobeyed his Master's orders. But *Steinbock*, the Duke, and all his country, paid dear for his contrivance. The Czar, with the Kings of *Denmark* and *Prussia*, blocked up *Tonningen*: and this little army was disappointed of provisions by a fatality which attended the affairs of *Sweden* through the course of this whole war.



*Steinbock* was forced at last to surrender himself a prisoner to the King of *Denmark* on the 17th of *March* 1713, and thus was the army scattered that had won the famous battles of *Hel-simbours* and *Gadebusch*, under a General of mighty hopes; and the King of *Denmark* had this satisfaction, that he had now in his hands the very man who had stopped the progress of his arms, and reduced his town of *Altena* to ashes. *Steinbock*, when he evacuated *Tonningen*, told the King that he got in thither by stratagem, and that he had deceived the Governor. This Officer swore to the same effect: choosing rather the shame of having been surprized, than to betray his Master's secret.

The Duke of *Holstein* and the Bishop, who was the administrator, protested they had faithfully preserved a neutrality; and begged the mediation of the King of *Prussia* and Elector of *Hanover*. But all their artifices were in vain without a better force; for the King of *Denmark* with his own army and the Czar's, sometime after besieged *Wolf* in *Tonningen*, who surrendered, and at last confessed the secret, which the *Danes* had more than suspected all along.

This furnished a pretence for the *Dane* to seize the Duke of *Holstein's* country, and he has taken care to keep the greatest part of it ever since. But though he was so severe to the Duke, his treatment of *Steinbock* was much otherwise, and shewed, that Kings sometimes consider their interests rather than revenge. The incendiary of *Altena* was suffered to go free in *Copenhagen* on parole; and the King affected a more than ordinary civility to him, till endeavouring to escape he



he was seized and proved guilty of the breach of his parole. Then he was confined close, and forced to ask the King's pardon, which he soon obtained.

*Pomerania*, all but *Straelsund*, the isle of *Rugen*, and some neighbouring places, being defenceless, became a prey to the Allies, and was sequester'd in the hands of the King of *Prussia*. *Bremen* was filled with *Danish* garrisons. At the same time the *Moscovites* over-ran all *Finland*, and beat the *Swedes*, who were quite out of heart; and being much inferior to their foes in number, had no longer the superiority over them in valour.

To complete the misfortunes of *Sweden*, the King was still resolved to stay at *Demotica*, and fed himself with the vain expectation of assistance from the *Turks*.

The *Visir*, *Ibrahim Molla*, who had been so obstinately bent upon a war with the *Moscovites* in opposition to the Favourite, was strangled between two doors.

And now the place of *Visir* was become so dangerous, that none dared to take it: however, when it had been vacant for about six months, *Ali Coumourgi* the favourite was preferred to it. The King of *Sweden* lost all hopes, for he knew *Coumourgi* would never befriend him farther than for his own ends.

He had been buried here in oblivion and inactivity for about eleven months; which following close upon the most violent exercise, made that illness real, which before was but feigned. In *Europe* they verily thought him dead; and the Regency, which he settled when he left *Stockholm*, hearing nothing from him, the Senate waited



ed on the Princess *Ulric Eleonora* to desire she would take the Regency in her Brother's absence. She accordingly accepted of it ; but finding the Senate had a mind to force her to a peace with the Czar and *Denmark*, that on every side were falling upon *Sweden*, which she knew the King would never ratify, she resigned the Regency, and wrote him a full account of the matter to *Turky*.

The King received her letters at *Demotica*, and those despotick notions which he had early imbibed, made him quite forget that ever *Sweden* had been a free state, or that the Senate used to share in the government of it with their former Kings.

He looked upon them all as servants that took upon them to govern the family in their Master's absence ; and wrote them word, if that were what they wanted, he would send them one of his boots, to which they might apply for orders:

Wherefore to prevent any attempts in *Sweden* against his authority, and that he might defend his country ; hoping nothing more now from the *Ottomans*, but depending only on himself, he signified to the Grand Visir his desire to be gone, by the way of *Germany*.

*Desalleurs*, the *French* Ambassador, who transacted all the affairs of *Sweden*, made the proposal. Well, says the Visir, did not I tell you, that the King of *Sweden* would be glad to go before the year was at an end ? Tell him, he may use his pleasure ; but let him resolve, and fix his day, that we may have no more trouble with him, as we had at *Bender*.

Count



Count *Desalleurs* took care to soften these expressions when he told the King. So the day was set; and *Charles* before he went was willing to make a figure as a King notwithstanding the stretched condition he was in. He made *Grothusen* his Ambassador extraordinary, and sent him in form to take his leave at *Constantinople*, with a train of fourscore persons richly dressed.

But the embassy was not half so splendid, as the gifts were mortifying to which he was put to furnish the expence of it.

Monsieur *Desalleurs* lent the King forty thousand crowns. *Grothusen* by his agents at *Constantinople*, borrowed at the rate of fifty per cent. a thousand crowns of a Jew, of an *English* Merchant two hundred pistoles, and a thousand livres of a Turk.

Thus they got sufficient to enable them to act the splendid farce of the *Swedish* embassy. At the *Porte* *Grothusen* had all the honours that were ever paid to Ambassadors extraordinary upon their day of audience. All this was done with a view to get money out of the Grand Visir; but that minister was inexorable.

*Grothusen* made a proposal to borrow a million of the *Porte*. But the Visir replied coldly, That his Master knew how to give when he had a mind, but it was below him ever to lend; that the King should have all things proper for his journey, and in a manner becoming him who gave it; and that perhaps the *Porte* might make him some present in gold, but he would not have him expect it."

On the first of *October* 1714. the King began his journey. A *Capigi Basha* with six *Chiaoux*,  
went



went to attend him from the castle of *Demirtaş* whither he had removed a few days before. The presents they brought him from the Grand Signior were, a large tent of scarlet embroidered with gold, a sabre, the handle of which was set with Jewels, eight beautiful *Arabian* horses with fine saddles and stirrups of massive silver. It is not below an historian to tell, that the *Arabian* groom, who took care of the horses, gave the King an account of their genealogy; it being the custom there to take more notice of the pedigree of horses than of men: Which is not unreasonable, because if we are careful of the breed, those animals are never known to degenerate.

The convoy consisted of threescore carriages laden with all sorts of provision, and three hundred horse. The *Capigi Basha*, knowing that several *Turks* had advanced money to the King's attendants at excessive interest, said, *That as usury was forbidden by the law of Mahomet, he desired his Majesty to settle the debts in such a manner, that his Resident at Constantinople should only pay the principal.* No, says the King, *if any of my people have given notes for an hundred crowns, I will pay them though they had but ten from the lender.*

He made a proposal to the Creditors to follow him, promising payment of all their debts and charges. A great many of them went to *Sweden* and *Grothusen* was ordered to see them paid.

The *Turks*, to shew the more respect to their guest, made but short days journeys. But this he could not bear. He got up as usual, about three in the morning; and as soon as he was dressed



dress, he went and called up the *Capigi* and *Chiaoux*, and ordered them to march in the dark. This way of travelling suited but ill with the *Turkish* gravity, and the King was pleased to find it so, and said he should be a little even with them for their treatment of him at *Bender*.

When he came to the *Turkish* frontiers, *Stanislaus* was going thence another way into *Germany*, intending to retire into the Dutchy of *Deux-Ponts*, a country that borders on the Palatinate of the *Rhine*, and *Alsace*; which, from the time it was united to that crown by *Christiana's* successor *Charles X.* had belonged to the Kings of *Sweden*. *Charles* assigned to *Stanislaus* the revenue of this Dutchy, which was then reckoned to be about seventy thousand crowns. And this was the end of so many projects and wars, and expectations. *Stanislaus* could and would have made a good agreement with *Augustus* if *Charles* had not been so untractable and positive; to make him lose a vast estate in *Poland*, only that he might preserve the name of King.

This Prince resided at *Deux-Ponts* till *Charles's* death; which Dutchy falling then to the *Palatine* family, he retired to *Wissembourg*, a place belonging to the *French* in *Alsace*. Upon which *M. Sum*, Envoy from King *Augustus*, making complaint to the Duke of *Orleans*, Regent of *France*, received this remarkable answer.

Sir, let the King your Master know that *France* has ever been a refuge for Kings in misfortune.

When the King of *Sweden* came to the *German* frontiers, he found the Emperor had given orders for his reception every where with proper state. Wherever harbingers had fixed his route,  
great



great preparations were making to entertain him and a world of people came to behold the man whose conquests and misfortunes, whose least actions, and even his Repose had made so much noise both in *Europe* and in *Asia*. But *Charles* had no Inclination to so much pomp, or to make a shew of the prisoner at *Bender*, and had even form'd a resolution never to enter his City of *Stockholm*, till he had retrieved his misfortunes by a more auspicious turn of affairs.

So dismissing his *Turkish* attendants at *Targowitz*, on the borders of *Transylvania*; he called his people together in a yard, and bid them take no thought for him, but make the best of their way to *Straelsund* in *Pomerania*, about three hundred leagues from thence, up the *Baltick* Sea.

He took no body with him, but one *During*, a young man, whom he made a Colonel afterwards. He parted chearfully with his Officers, leaving them in great confusion and concern for him. For a disguise he wore a black peruke, under which he tucked his own hair, a gold laced hat, gray clothes, and a blue cloke, passing for a *German* Officer, and rid post with only Colonel *During*.

In all the way he kept clear, as much as he possibly could, of any place that belonged to his open or concealed enemies; and so by the way of *Hungary*, *Moravia*, *Austria*, *Bavaria*, *Wirttemberg*, the *Palatinate*, *Westphalia* and *Mecklenburg*, he made almost the tour of *Germany*, which was farther by half than he need have gone.

Having rid all the first day without stopping, *During* not being used to such fatigues, fainted away



away when he came to alight. The King would not stay a moment, but asked *During*, *What money he had!* he said, *About a thousand crowns. Give me half,* says the King, *I see you cannot go on; I'll go without you.* *During* begged he would but stay three hours, and he was sure by that time he should be able to go on, and desired him to consider the danger of going alone. The King would not be persuaded, but made him give him the five hundred crowns, and called for horses. *During*, afraid of what might happen, bethought himself of this contrivance. He takes the Post-master aside: *Friend,* says he, *this is my cousin, we are going upon business together, and you see he won't stay for me but three hours; prithee give him the worst horse you have; and let me have a post chaise, or some such thing.*

He put a couple of *ducats* in the man's hand, and was obeyed punctually: So the King had a horse that was both lame and resty. Away he went about ten at night, through the snow, and wind, and rain. His fellow-traveller, after a few hours rest, set out again in a chaise with very good horses. About break of day he overtook the King, with his horse tired, and walking towards the next stage.

Then he was forced to get in with *During*, and slept upon the straw, and afterwards they never stopped, but went on, on horseback all day, and sleeping in a chaise all night.

Thus, in sixteen days riding, and often in danger of being taken, he came at last upon the 21st of *November 1714.* to the gates of *Straelsund*, about one in the morning.

The



The King said, he was a Courier from the King in *Turky*, and must speak immediately with General *Duker* the Governor. The Centinel told him, it was too late, the Governor was a-bed, and he must stay till day-light.

The King said it was an affair of consequence; and declared if he did not go directly and awake the Governor, they should all be hanged in the morning. At last a serjeant went and called the Governor; and *Duker* thinking it might be some General Officer, ordered the gates to be opened, and the Courier was brought up to his chamber.

*Duker*, rubbing his eyes, asked, "What news of his Majesty?" The King took him by the shoulder, What, says he, *Duker*, have my best Subjects forgot me? The General could scarce believe his eyes, and jumping out of bed, embraced his Master's knees with tears of joy. The news was all over the town in an instant. Every body got up; the soldiers came about the Governor's house. The streets were full of people, asking if the news were true? The windows were illuminated, the conduits ran with wine, and the artillery fired.

However, the King was put to bed, which was more than he had been for sixteen days; they were forced to cut off his boots, his legs were so swollen with the fatigue. He had neither linen, nor clothes; and they provided in haste whatever they could find to fit him. When he had slept some hours, the first thing he did was to review his troops, and examine the fortifications. And that very day he sent out orders  
into



into all parts for renewing the war with more vigour than ever against all his enemies.

*Europe* was now in a condition very different from what it was when King *Charles* left it in 1709.

The war was over in the South, between *Germany, England, Holland, France, Spain, Portugal* and *Italy*. This general peace was owing to some private quarrels that happened in the court of *England*. The Earl of *Oxford*, an able Minister, and the Lord *Bolingbroke*, a man of the finest wit and parts of the age, had got the better of the famous Duke of *Marlborough*, and persuaded Queen *Anne* to make a peace with *Louis XIV. France*, being well with *England*, brought the other powers quickly to an accommodation.

*Philip* the Vth. grandson to *Louis XIV.* began to reign in peace over the ruins of the *Spanish* Monarchy. The Emperor, being master of *Naples* and *Flanders*, was firmly settled in his vast dominions. *Louis XIV.* wanted nothing more than that he might finish his long course in peace.

Queen *Anne* of *England* died in *Aug. 1714.* hated by half her people for giving peace to so many nations. Her B—— *James Stuart*, an unhappy Prince, at his birth almost excluded from the throne, not appearing in *England* to claim the succession, which in order to settle on him, new laws would have been made in case his party there could have prevailed; *George* the first, Elector of *Hanover*, was unanimously acknowledged King of *Great-Britain*: The throne coming to this Elector, not by right of blood, though descended



scended from a daughter of *James* the first, but by virtue of an act of Parliament.

Being in years when he was called to reign over a people whose language he did not understand, and where every thing was strange to him, he looked upon himself rather as Elector of *Hanover* than as King of *England*. And his great ambition was to aggrandize his *German* dominions. He went over every year \* to visit his subjects there, who adored him. In other things, he was better pleased with what he could enjoy as a Man, than as a King. The pride of Majesty was what he hated: And his delight was to converse in great familiarity with a few old courtiers. He was not the King that made the greatest figure in *Europe*; but he was one of the wisest, and perhaps the only one, who could taste upon a throne the pleasures of friendship and a private life.

These were the chief Princes; and this the situation of the South of *Europe*.

The alterations in the North were of another nature; the Kings there were at war, united all against the King of *Sweden*.

*Augustus* had been long restored to the crown of *Poland* by the assistance of the Czar, and with consent of the Emperor: Queen *Anne*, and the States General, who tho' Guarantees for the treaty of *Altranstadt* in *Charles's* better days, thought no more of their obligations that way, when they found there was nothing more to fear from him.

\* Every second or third year.

*Voltaire's* answer. He crossed the Sea three times in three years.



But *Augustus* was not quite so easy in his throne. His people's fears of arbitrary power returned with their King, and they were all in arms to make him submit to the *Pacta conventa*, which is a solemn contract between the King and them; seeming to have called him home for nothing else but to make war upon him. In the beginning of these troubles not a syllable was said of *Stanislaus*, his party in all appearance being come to nothing, and they remembered no more of the King of Sweden than as of a torrent, which for a while had born down all before it.

*Pultowa*, and the absence of *Charles*, by which *Stanislaus* fell, occasioned also the Duke of *Holstein's* fall, who, being *Charles's* nephew, was dispossessed of his dominions by the King of *Denmark*. The King of *Sweden* had a love for the father, and was greatly concerned at his son's losses: besides, as he never did any thing but for glory, the fall of Princes, which himself had set up, was full as grievous to him as all his own losses.

Of that he lost, every one was catching what he could. *Frederick William* \*, the new King

\* By the manner in which this fact is related by *Mr. Voltaire*, it should seem as if the King of *Prussia* had made himself master of *Stetin* by stratagem. But in Reality he paid 400000 crowns to the *Dane* and the *Moscovite*, by the Consent of the regency of *Sweden*, over which the Princess *Ulrica Eleonora*, the King's sister and the present Queen of that kingdom, presided. The regency were better satisfied that *Stetin* should be sequester'd in the hands of the King of *Prussia*, who was not at war with *Sweden*, and who promised to restore that place upon the reimbursement of the money he had advanced, than to see it in the hands of the *Danes* or *Moscovites*.

*Voltaire's Answer.* The nature of taking cities and provinces in sequestration is sufficiently known. The publick is too discerning to be ignorant of this honest and politick custom of appropriating to itself the possessions of others.



of *Prussia*, who seemed as much inclined to war as ever his father was to peace, took *Stetin* and a part of *Pomerania* for four hundred thousand crowns, which he advanced to the King of *Denmark* and the Czar.

*George*, the Elector of *Hanover*, who was just come to be King of *England*, had likewise sequester'd into his hands the Dutchy of *Bremen* and *Verden*, which the King of *Denmark* had assigned to him as a deposit for threescore thousand pistoles which he lent that prince. Thus they disposed of *Charles's* spoils; and whoever was possessed of them as pledges became, by the course of their own interests, as dangerous enemies to him as any of those who took them from him.

The Czar indeed was most of all to be feared. His former defeats, his victories, nay, his very faults, with his diligence to learn, and care to teach his subjects what he learnt, and his incessant labours, contributed to make him a very great man. *Riga*, *Livonia*, *Ingria*, *Carelia*, part of *Finland*, and all the countries that had been won by *Charles's* ancestors, were now subject to the *Moscowite*.

*Peter Alexiowitz*, who but twenty years before had not so much as a single vessel on the *Baltick*, had made himself Master of those seas, with a fleet of no less than thirty ships of the line.

He built one of these ships with his own hands, and was the best carpenter, the best Admiral, and the best pilot in all the north. He himself had sounded every difficult passage from the gulph of *Bothnia*, quite to the ocean. And having joined the labours of a common sailor to the experiments of a Philosopher, and the noble designs of a great



a great Emperor; by his many victories, he had passed thro' all the degrees that could make him at sea a skilful Admiral, as he had done before to make himself a good General at land.

While Prince *Gallicsin*, a General bred up under him, and the best at assisting his designs, completed the conquest of *Finland*, took *Vasa*, and beat the *Swedes*: This Emperor put to sea to make a descent on *Alan*, an island in the *Baltick*, about twelve leagues from *Stockholm*.

He went upon this expedition in the beginning of *July*, 1714. while his rival *Charles* was in bed at *Demotica*. He embarked at *Cronslot*, a harbour which he had built a few years before about four miles from *Petersbourg*. The harbour, the fleet, the officers and sailors, were all the work of his own hands; and he could look on nothing but what he had in a manner himself created.

The *Russian* fleet came to the heights of *Alan* on the 15th of *July*, consisting of thirty ships of the line, fourscore galleys, and a hundred half galleys, with 20000 soldiers. Admiral *Apraxin* was Commander, and the Emperor was Rear-Admiral. The *Swedish* fleet came up with them on the 16th, commanded by Vice-Admiral *Erinchild*, not so strong by two thirds. They fought however for three hours. The Czar attacked the Admiral, and took her after a sharp engagement.

The same day he landed sixteen thousand men at *Aland*, and took a great many *Swedish* soldiers who could not get aboard the fleet, and carried them off prisoners in his own ships. Then he returned to *Cronslot*; with *Erinchild's* ship, and  
N three



three lesser ones, a frigate and six galleys that he had taken.

From *Cronslot* he went on to *Petersbourg*, followed by his victorious fleet, and the ships he had taken. He was received with a triple discharge of 150 cannon. Then he made his triumphant entry, which pleased him more than that at *Moscow*, as being in his favourite city, where but ten years before there was not so much as a shed, and that had in it now no less than four and thirty thousand five hundred houses: Being himself at the head of a victorious navy, of the first *Russian* fleet that ever was seen in the *Baltick*, and among a people who before his time had never known what a fleet was.

At *Petersbourg* the ceremonies were much the same as those which before had graced the triumph of *Moscow*; the *Swedish* Vice-Admiral was the best of the shew. *Peter Alexiowitz* appeared as Rear-Admiral, and a *Russian* nobleman, one *Romanodowsky*, that represented the Czar upon such solemn occasions, was seated upon a throne with twelve Senators about him. The Rear-Admiral presented him a relation of his victories, and was thereupon made Vice-Admiral in consideration of his services. An odd ceremony, but which is not amiss, in a Country where military subordinations were part of the novelties which the Czar had introduced among them.

The Emperor of *Moscovy* being thus victorious over the *Swedes* by sea and land, and having helped to chase them out of *Poland*, was Master there in his turn. He made himself a Mediator between the King and the Republick, an honour perhaps equal to that of setting up a King. The fortune



fortune and figure which *Charles* used to make were now the Czar's, who really made a better use of those advantages, for his successes were always for the benefit of his country. If he took a town, the industry of the artisans was all transferred to *Petersbourg*. The manufactures, arts and sciences of any place he took were carried home to enrich and polish his own country: So that he had certainly the best excuse that can be made for any conqueror.

But *Sweden* had lost all her foreign provinces, and had neither trade nor money, nor credit; her veteran troops who were once so formidable, were either killed or died for want. Above one hundred thousand *Swedes* were slaves in the vast Dominions of *Moscovy*; and almost as many more were sold to the *Turks* and *Tartars*. The very species of men was visibly decayed in the country; but notwithstanding all this, their hopes revived as soon as ever they heard their King was come to *Straelsund*.

Such strong impressions of admiration and respect reigned in the hearts of all his subjects, that multitudes of young people came out of all parts of the country, and offered themselves to be lifted, tho' there were not hands enough at home to cultivate the land.

*The End of the Seventh Book.*



THE  
HISTORY  
OF  
CHARLES XII.  
KING of SWEDEN.  
BOOK VIII.

The CONTENTS.

*Charles marries his sister to the Prince of Hesse. He is besieged at Straelsund, and escapes to Sweden. The practices of Baron Goerts his first Minister. Schemes for a reconciliation with the Czar, and of a descent into England. Charles besieges Frederickshall in Norway. Is killed. His character. Goerts beheaded.*

**T**H E King, during these preparations, gave his only surviving sister *Ulrica Eleonora* in marriage to *Frederick Prince of Hesse Cassel*.

The Queen Dowager, Grandmother of *Charles the XIIth* and the Princess, and fourscore years of



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of age, assisted at the ceremony, on the 4th of April, 1715. in the palace of *Stockholm*, and died soon after.

This marriage was not honoured with the King's presence, who was now busy in finishing the fortifications of *Straelsund*, a place of great importance, which was in danger from the Kings of *Denmark* and *Prussia*. However he made his brother-in-law Generalissimo of all his forces in *Sweden*. This Prince had served the States-General in the *French* war: And was esteemed a good General, which contributed not a little to facilitate his marriage with *Charles's* sister.

Misfortunes now come on as fast as once his victories had done. In June 1715. the King of *England's* German forces, with those of *Denmark*, invested the strong town of *Wismar*. The *Danes*, the *Prussians* and the *Saxons*, to the number of six and thirty thousand, marched in a body to *Straelsund*, in order to form the siege. Not far from *Straelsund* five *Swedish* ships were sunk by the *Danes* and *Prussians*. The Czar kept the *Baltick* with twenty large men of war and one hundred and fifty transports, that had thirty thousand men aboard. He threatened a descent on *Sweden*, appearing on the coast of *Helsinbourg* and *Stockholm* by turns. All *Sweden* was in arms upon the coasts expecting an invasion. His land forces were chasing the *Swedes* from all the places they possessed in *Finland* towards the gulph of *Bothnia*. But he attempted nothing farther.

At the mouth of the *Oder*, a river that divides *Pomerania*, and passing by *Stetin* falls into the *Baltick*, there is a little island called *Usedom*.



Its situation makes it a place of vast importance; for it commands the *Oder* both on the right and left, and whoever has it is master of the navigation of that river. The King of *Prussia* had dislodged the *Swedes* from thence, \* keeping that as well as *Stetin* in his hands, and said, he did it purely for the sake of peace. The *Swedes* however had retaken *Usedom*, in *May* 1715. and held two forts there, one called *Suine*, upon a branch of the *Oder* of that name, the other *Penamondre*, of greater consequence, upon another part of the river. The forts and indeed all the Island were manned with but 250 *Pomeranians*, commanded by an old *Swedish* Officer named *Duslep* or *Dusterp*, a man who well deserves to be remembered.

On the 4th of *August*, the King of *Prussia* sent 1500 foot and 800 dragoons into the island. They landed without opposition on the side of *Suine*, which fort the *Swedish* Officer had left, being a place of least importance, and unwilling to divide his little company, he retired with them into the castle of *Penamondre*, resolving to hold out to the last extremity.

\* The isle of *Usedom* had been delivered up, as well as *Stetin*, to the King of *Prussia*, by the consent of the regency of *Sweden*; but *Charles* the XIIth refused to ratify that concession of the regency, and in consequence of that resolution dislodged the *Prussians*, and by that instance of hostility began a war with the King of *Prussia*, who had only been desirous to continue neuter, and offered to restore *Stetin* provided *Charles* would pay him 400000 crowns, and promise not to enter into *Saxony* or *Poland* through *Pomerania*.

*Voltaire's Answer.* It is well known that the regency of *Sweden* had been compelled by the unfavourable situation of affairs to deliver up the isle of *Usedom*, but the King of *Sweden* never ratified that concession.



So they were forced to make a siege in all the forms. They shipped artillery at *Stetin*, and sent in a reinforcement of 1000 *Prussian* foot and 400 horse. On the 18th they opened the trenches in two places, and played a brisk battery of cannon and mortars. In the time of a siege, a *Swedish* soldier sent privately with a letter from *Charles*, found means to land on the island, and slip into *Penamondre*. He gave the letter to the Commander, which was in these words.

*Do not fire till the enemy comes to the brink of the fossé: stand on your defence till the last drop of blood. I commend you to your good fortune.*  
CHARLES.

*Duslerp* having read the note, resolved to obey, and die, as he was ordered, to serve his Master. The 22d, by break of day, the assault was given. The besieged made their fire as directed, and killed abundance; but the *fossé* was full, the breach large, and the besiegers too numerous. They entered in two different places at once. The commander now thought he had nothing more to do than obey his orders, and sell his life dear: he abandoned the breaches, intrenched his little company, who had all honour and courage enough to go with him, and placed them so that they should not be surrounded. The enemy came on, wondering he would not ask for quarter. But he fought a whole hour, and when he had lost half his soldiers, was killed at last with his Lieutenant and his Major. There were then a hundred men left, and one Officer, who asked their lives, and were taken prisoners. In the



Commander's pocket they found his Master's letter, which was carried to the King of *Prussia*.

At the time when *Charles* sustained the loss of *Usedom*, and the neighbouring islands, which were quickly taken, while *Wismar* was ready to surrender, and *Sweden* had no longer any fleet but was reduced to the utmost danger, he himself was in *Straelsund*, besieged by six and thirty thousand men.

*Straelsund*, a town famous over *Europe* for the siege the King of *Sweden* sustained there, is one of the strongest places in *Pomerania*. It is built between the *Baltick* and the lake of *Franken*, near the streights of *Gella*. There is no way to it at land but by a narrow causeway, defended by a citadel, and fortifications that were once thought inaccessible. There was in it a garrison of 9000 men, and more than all, the King of *Sweden* himself. The Kings of *Denmark* and *Prussia* besieged it with an army of 36000 men, consisting of *Prussians*, *Danes* and *Saxons*.

The honour of besieging *Charles* was so engaging a motive to them that they surmounted all obstacles, and the trenches were opened in the night between the 19th and 20th of *October* 1715.

The King of *Sweden* said at first, he wondered how any place well manned and fortified could possibly be taken. Not but he had taken many towns himself in the course of his victories, but never any one by regular attack. It was the terror of his arms that gained them. Besides, he never judged of others by himself, nor made a proper account of his enemies. The besiegers carried on their works with great vigour, in which



which they were strangely assisted by an uncommon accident.

It is well known that the *Baltick* has no flux and reflux. And the retrenchment that covered the town was thought impracticable, having an unpassable marsh upon the West, and the sea to the East. Never any one had observed before, that in a strong westerly wind the waves of the *Baltick* do roll back in such a manner as to leave but three feet water under the retrenchment, and they always took it to be here considerably deep.

\* A soldier happening to fall from the top of the retrenchment, was surprized to find a bottom, and imagined that discovery would make his fortune. He deserted, and went to Count *Wakerbath's* quarters, who was General of the *Saxon* forces, telling him that the sea was fordable, and that it would be easy to carry the *Swedes* retrenchments. The King of *Prussia* was not wanting to improve the hint.

The next night the wind being still at West, Lieutenant Colonel † *Koppen* went into the water with 1800 men, 2000 advanced at the same time upon the causeway that led to the intrenchments:

\* This and what follows is entirely false, and the real fact is directly thus: Mr. *de Koppen* a Colonel in the *Prussian* service, had studied at *Strælsund*, and as he frequently bathed himself in the sea, he found that the fortification terminated in a place where the water was not above four feet deep. He communicated this discovery to the King his master, and desired to be ordered out to possess himself of that fortification, and his request was granted.

*Voltaire's Answer.* I have been assured that this discovery was made by a common soldier, and it was not the first time that superiors have derived advantages from the knowledge of their inferiors.

† *Koppen* a *Pomeranian* Gentleman, was a Colonel in the King of *Prussia's* service, and his *aid de camp*, and favourite.



all the *Prussian* artillery fired, and the *Prussians* and *Danes* gave an alarm on the other side.

The *Swedes* were confident they could deal with those who according to all appearance came on so rashly by the causeway; but *Koppen* with his 1800 men entered the fortification from the sea and so that they could make no head; and the post was carried after a prodigious slaughter. Some of the *Swedes* retired into the town, but the besiegers followed them, and some got in with those that fled. Two Officers, and four of the *Saxon* soldiers, were got upon the draw-bridge; but the *Swedes* had just time enough to raise it, and took the men, and so for that time the town was saved.

They found four and twenty pieces of cannon upon the retrenchments, which they turned against the town. — The siege after this success was carried on with all possible eagerness, and the town was cannonaded and bombarded without remission.

Over-against *Straelsund*, upon the *Baltick*, is the island of *Rugen*, which serves for a defence to this place, whither the garrison and people could retire upon occasion, if they had but boats. This island was of great consequence to *Charles*; for he knew if once the enemy were masters of it, he should soon be invested both by sea and land, and probably buried in the ruins of *Straelsund*, or else be a prisoner to those whom he had before so much despised, and treated with such severity. However, the ill state of his affairs had not allowed him to send a sufficient garrison to *Rugen*, there being no more than two thousand regular troops in all upon the island.

The



The enemy had been for three months making all proper dispositions for a descent thither, which was very difficult : but having built boats for the purpose, the Prince of *Anhalt*, by the favour of good weather, landed at last 12000 men upon the place on the 15th of *November*.

That very day the King had been defending an outwork for three hours, and coming back very much fatigued, he was told that the *Danes* and *Prussians* were in *Rugen*. It was eight o'clock at night, and he went directly in a fisher-boat with *Poniatofsky*, *Grothusen*, *During* and *Dardof*; and by nine he got to the island. He joined his two thousand men, who were entrenched near a little haven about three leagues from where the enemy had landed. He marched with them at midnight in great silence. The Prince of *Anhalt* had already entrenched his troops, with a caution that seemed unnecessary. His officers expected nothing in the night, and thought *Charles* was at *Straelfund*. But the Prince, who knew what *Charles* was capable of attempting, ordered a deep *fossé* to be sunk with *chevaux de frise* upon the edge of it, and took as much precaution as if he had to do with an army of superior force.

At two in the morning *Charles* came to the enemies camp, without making the least noise. His soldiers said to one another, *let us pull up the chevaux de frise*; which words were overheard by the Centinels; and the alarm being quickly given, the enemies stood to their arms. The King taking up the *chevaux de frise*, sees a great *fossé*. *Ay*, says he, is it possible! *this is more than I expected!* Not at all discouraged, and knowing nothing of their numbers, nor they



of his, for the night favoured him in that, he resolved in an instant, jumped into the ditch, and some of the boldest with him, and all the rest were quickly after him. The *chevaux de frise* that were removed; the levelled earth; trunks and branches of trees as they could be found, and the bodies of the dead who fell by random shot served for fascines. The King, the Generals, and the boldest of the Officers and soldiers mounted upon the shoulders of others as in assaults. The fight began in the enemies camp; and the vigour of the *Swedes* put the *Danes* and *Prussians* into great disorder; but their numbers being too unequal, the *Swedes* were repulsed in about a quarter of an hour, and repassed the *fosse*. The Prince of *Anhalt* pursued them to the plain, little thinking it was *Charles* who fled before him. The unfortunate King rallied his troops in the field, and the fight was renewed with equal warmth on both sides. He saw his favourite *Grothusen* and General *Dardoff* fall, and passed over the last in fighting before he was quite dead. During, his companion from *Turkey* to *Straelsund*, was killed before his face.

In the heat of the battle a *Danish* Lieutenant whose name I never could be informed of, knew the King of *Sweden*, and clapping one hand on his sword, and with the other seizing him by the hair; yield your self a prisoner, Sir, said he, or I will kill you upon the spot. *Charles* drew a pistol from his belt, and, with his left hand, fired it at the officer, who died of the shot the next morning. The name of King *Charles*, which the *Dane* had pronounced, drew a crowd of enemies together in a moment, the King was  
imme-



immediately surrounded, and received a musket shot below his left breast. The wound, which he only called a contusion, was two fingers deep: The King was then on foot, and in the utmost danger of being either made a prisoner, or slain. Count *Poniatofsky*, at this critical instant, fought near his Majesty's person. He had already saved the King's life at *Pultowa*, and had the good fortune to preserve him once more in the battle of *Rugen*, and to remount him very seasonably.

The *Swedes* retired to a part of the island named *Alteferra*, where there was a fort they were yet masters of. From thence the King returned to *Straelsund*, obliged to leave those brave troops who had served him so well in that expedition: and they were all made prisoners of war two days after.

Among the prisoners was that unfortunate *French* regiment, the remains of the battle of *Hochstet*, which had been in the service of King *Augustus*, and afterwards with the King of *Sweden*. Most of the soldiers were incorporated into a new regiment belonging to the Prince of *Anhalt's* son, who was their fourth Master. In *Rugen* the commander of this wandering regiment was then the famous Count *de Villelongue*, who had so generously ventured his life at *Adrianople* to serve King *Charles*. He was taken with his men, and but ill rewarded afterwards for all his services, fatigues and sufferings.

The King after all these prodigies of valour having only weakened himself, and continuing to be shut up in *Straelsund*, and ready to be taken, was yet the same as he had been before at *Bender*; he



he was surpris'd at nothing. All the day he was making ditches and entrenchments behind the walls; and at night he sallied out upon the enemy. The town however was shattered miserably, the bombs fell thick upon the houses, and half the town reduced to ashes. The inhabitants far from repining, were charmed to admiration at their Master, whose temperance, fatigues and courage astonished them beyond expression; they acted as soldiers under him; following him to the sallies, and were now become as good as another garrison.

One day as the King was dictating to a Secretary some dispatches for *Sweden*, a bomb falling on the house, came through the roof, and burst very near his room. Part of the floor fell down; but the closet where the King was being worked into a thick wall, was not shatter'd; and by a wonderful good fortune none of the splinters came in at the door, though it was open. In this noise and confusion the Secretary dropped his pen, and thought the house was coming down. *What ails you*, says the King very calmly, *Why don't you write?* The man could only bring out, *The bomb, Sir!* Well, says the King, *and what has that to do with our business?* Go on.

An Ambassador of *France* was then shut up in *Straelsund* with the King of *Sweden*, M. Colbert, Count de Croissy, one of the King's Lieutenant Generals, and brother to the Marquis de Torcy, a famous statesman, related to the great Colbert, whose name in *France* will be immortal. To send a man on an embassy to *Charles*, or into trenches was much the same. The King would talk with Croissy for hours together, in places of  
the



the greatest danger ; while people fell on all sides killed by the bombs and cannon, the King having no sense of it ; and the Ambassador not caring to say any thing, to make him choose a fitter place to talk of business. Before the siege, this Minister took a deal of pains to make an accommodation between the Kings of *Sweden* and *Prussia* : But the latter was too high in his demands ; and the other would not make any concessions. So that the Count *de Croissy* had only this satisfaction in his embassy, to be acquainted intimately with a man of his singular character. He has often slept by him upon the same cloke ; so that by sharing with him in all his dangers and fatigues, he became very free with him, and *Charles* was not displeased with that in any one he liked. He would sometimes say to *Croissy*, *Veni, maledicamus de Rege. Come, now for a little scandal on the King of Sweden.*

*Croissy* stayed in the town till the thirteenth of *November* : And then with the enemy's permission for him and his baggage, he took his leave of *Charles*, whom he left among the ruins of *Straelsund*, with but one third remaining of his garrison, and in full resolution to stand an assault.

In four days the enemy made an assault upon the hornwork, which they took twice, and were as often beaten off. The King was always fighting among the granadiers : But at last their number prevailing, they became masters of it. *Charles* continued in the place two days after that. The one and twentieth, he staid till midnight upon a little ravelin that was quite destroyed by the bombs and cannon. The next day the chief officers



ficers entreated him to stay no longer in a place which could not be defended. But to retreat was now as dangerous as to stay. The *Baltick* was covered with *Moscovite* and *Danish* ships. In the port of *Straelsund* there was a small bark with sails and oars. The extreme danger which made such a retreat glorious, induced *Charles* to consent to it, and he embarked the 20th of *December* 1715. at night, with only ten persons. They were obliged to break the ice to get out, which took them up several hours before the vessel could make her way. The enemy's admiral had strict orders not to let *Charles* escape from *Straelsund*, but to be sure to take him dead or alive. It happened well for him, that they were under the wind, and so could not come near him. But his greatest danger was in passing by a place called *la Barbette* in *Rugen*, where the *Danes* had fixed a battery of twelve cannon. They fired upon the King, but the sailors made all the sail they could to get clear of them. Two men were killed close by him, and by another shot the mast was shattered. Thro' all these dangers the King came up with two of his ships that were cruising in the *Baltick*, and the next day *Straelsund* was surrendered, the garrison were made prisoners of war, and the King landed at *Isted* in *Scania*, and came to *Carelscoon* in a very different condition from what he had gone in from thence fifteen years before in a ship of 120 guns to give law to all the North.

Being so near his capital, it was expected he would have gone thither after so long absence. But he could not bear to think of that till he had got some signal victories. Besides, he could not prevail



prevail upon himself to revisit a people who loved him and whom he was compelled to oppress, in order to defend them against their enemies. He was only desirous to see his sister, and sent for her to meet him near the lake *Weter* in *Ostrogothia*. He went post with but one to attend him, stayed a day with her, and came back.

At *Carelsroon*, where he stayed the winter, he ordered new levies every where. He thought his subjects were only born to follow him to war, and he had used them all to think so too.

He listed many who were but fifteen years old. In several villages there were none left but old men, children and women; and in some places the women plowed the ground alone.

It was yet harder for him to have a fleet. But to bring that about, commissions were given to Privateers, who having great privileges, to the ruin of the country, provided him some ships. This was the last shift could be made in *Sweden*: to support the expence of which, it was necessary to break in upon the people's property, and there was no sort of extortion, but it was practised under the name of taxes. All the houses were searched, and the half of their provisions carried into the King's warehouses. The iron of the country was all bought up for his use, and paid for in paper, which he sold out for ready money. Whoever had any silk in their clothes, or wore perukes, or gilded swords were taxed; and there was a great rate for hearth-money. A people loaded thus with taxes would have rebelled against any other King; but here the most miserable peasant knew his master fared much harder.



harder than himself: So they submitted quietly to what their King was always the first to suffer.

In the publick dangers, private misfortunes were not thought of. They expected every moment to have the *Moscovites*, the *Danes*, the *Prussians*, the *Saxons*, and the *English* making a descent into *Sweden*. And the fear of this was so strong upon them, and not without reason, that those who had money or valuable goods took care to bury them.

Already there was an *English* fleet in the *Baltick*, and their orders were entirely unknown to the *Swedes*; and the King of *Denmark* had the Czar's word for it, that the next spring he would assist in making a descent into *Sweden*.

It was an extreme surprize to all *Europe*, who were attentive to the fortune of *Charles*, when instead of defending his country, which was threatened with invasions by so many princes, he marched into *Norway* in the month of *March* with 20000 men.

Since *Hannibal*, the world has not seen any General, who, when he could not make head against his enemies at home, had ever gone to attack them in their own dominions. His brother-in-law the Prince of *Hesse* attended him in this expedition.

There is no going from *Sweden* to *Norway*, but thro' by-ways that are very dangerous; and after that one meets at every turn with flashes of water from the sea among the rocks, that bridges must be made once a day at least. A very few *Danes* might have stopped the *Swedish* army; but such a quick invasion they could not foresee.



foresee. *Europe* was yet more at a loss to find the Czar so quiet, and not making a descent into *Sweden* as he had before agreed with his allies.

This inaction was the consequence of one of the greatest designs, and at the same time the most difficult to be executed of any that were ever formed by the imagination of man.

*Henry Baron de Goerts*, born in *Holstein* \*, and Minister of a Prince who had nothing left but the title of a Duke, had done great services to the King of *Sweden* during his stay at *Bender*, and was now become his Favourite and first Minister.

No man ever was at once so bold and so insinuating: So full of shifts at an ill turn: Or had such vast designs, or was so active in what he went about: No project was too much for him; and for means he was never at a loss: He would pursue his designs at any rate, with a profusion of presents, promises, oaths, truth or falsehood.

From *Sweden* he went to *France*, *England* and *Holland*, to lay the foundation of those designs, which he intended afterwards to put in execution. He was capable of inflaming all *Europe*, and had it in his head. He was in the cabinet what his Master was at the head of an army; and this gave him over *Charles* a greater ascendant than any Minister had ever had before him.

\* He was born in *Franconia* and was a Baron of the Empire.

*Voltaire's Answer.* I have been assured that he was born in *Holstein*, but the place of his nativity is of very little importance to this History!

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This King, who at twenty years of age had given orders to Count *Piper*, was willing to receive them now from Baron *Goerts*, and was the more submissive, because his misfortunes had put him under a necessity of taking advice: Besides that, *Goerts* gave him only such as was suitable to his high courage. He found that of all the Princes who were in league against him, *Charles's* resentment was chiefly against *George* Elector of *Hanover*, and King of *England*: Because he was the only one to whom *Charles* had never given any cause of complaint, and who engaged in the quarrel under the pretext of mediation, and with the sole view of holding *Bremen* and *Verden*, which he bought for a trifle of the King of *Denmark*, to whom they did not belong.

It was early that he discovered the Czar's secret discontent against the allies, who had all prevented his having any footing in *Germany*. *Wismar*, the only town remaining to the Swedes on this side of *Germany*, was just surrendered to the *Danes* and *Prussians* on the 14th of *February* 1716, who would not so much as suffer the *Moscovites* who were in *Mecklenbourg* to appear at the siege. Such repeated signs of diffidence for two years together had provoked the Czar, and did perhaps prevent the utter ruin of *Sweden*. There are many instances of a number of states in alliance conquered by a single power, but seldom any of a great Empire that has been conquered by several allies. For what their strength subdues, their divisions seldom fail to restore.

So long as from the year 1714, the Czar had had it in his power to make a descent on *Sweden*; but



but whether he could not agree with the Kings of *Poland*, *England*, *Denmark* and *Prussia*, allies, who had but too much cause to be jealous of his proceedings, or whether it was that he thought his troops not enough seasoned to attack that people at home, whose very peasants had beat the best of the *Danish* forces; he still took care to put it off.

The want of money was what had likewise hitherto delayed him. For the Czar was one of the greatest Monarchs in the world, but none of the richest, his revenue at that time not amounting to above 18 millions of *French* livres. He had discovered mines of gold, silver, iron and copper, but the gain to be made of them was very uncertain, and the working them expensive. He had established a large commerce; but the beginnings of it only furnished him with hopes. His new conquests encreased his power and his fame, but brought him very little treasure. It was a work of time to bind up the wounds of *Livonia*, a fertile country, which had suffered very much by a fifteen years war, by fire, sword and plague, almost unpeopled, and become chargeable to the conqueror. The fleets he now maintained, and every day some new enterprise, was what exhausted all his treasures. He had been reduced to the wretched expedient of raising the coin, a remedy that never cures the mischief, and is particularly prejudicial to any country whose imported commodities are larger than their exports.

It was upon these grounds that *Goerts* had laid the design of a revolution; he was bold enough to propose to the King of *Sweden* to make his peace



peace at any rate with the Emperor of *Moscow*, insinuating that the Czar was very angry with the Kings of *Poland* and *England*, and giving him withal to understand, that *Peter Alexiowitz* and *Charles* together might make the rest of *Europe* tremble.

There was no making peace with the Czar without yielding up to him a good many provinces that lie to the East and North of the *Baltick*. But *Goerts* made his master sensible, that in yielding such places as the Czar was master of already, and himself in no condition to retrieve, he might have the honour of replacing *Stanislaus* on the throne of *Poland*, and setting the person who was called *James* the second's son upon that of *England*, besides restoring the Duke of *Holstein* to his Dominions.

*Charles* was pleased with these grand ideas, though without building much upon them, and gave his Minister leave to act at large. *Goerts* left *Sweden* with full powers, which made him a Plenipotentiary to any Princes he had a mind to treat with. His first business was to try how the court of *Moscow* stood affected, which he did by the means of one *Areskine*, a Scotsman, the Czar's chief physician, a man devoted to the Pretender's interest, as most of the Scots were who did not subsist on favours from the court at *London*.

This physician set forth to Prince *Menzikov* the grandeur and importance of such a project with all the vivacity of a man who was much interested in the event. Prince *Menzikov* was pleased with the proposal, and the Czar came into it. Instead of a descent in *Sweden*, as had been



been agreed between him and his allies, he sent his troops to winter in *Mecklembourg*, and came there himself on pretence to settle some disputes between the Duke and his Nobles: but in reality to pursue his favourite purpose to gain a principality in *Germany*, for which he hoped to make a bargain with the Duke.

The allies were greatly irritated at this proceeding, not caring to have so terrible a neighbour near them, who, if once he should have any footing in *Germany*, might get to be Emperor, to the oppression of all the Sovereigns there. The greater their resentment was, *Goerts's* project went on the better. However, he negotiated with all the confederates, in order to conceal his private intrigues. The Czar amused them all with hopes, and *Charles* was all this while with his brother-in-law the Prince of *Hesse* in *Norway*, at the head of 20000 men; the country was defended by 11000 *Danes* divided into several parties; which were all put to the sword by the King and Prince of *Hesse*.

*Charles* advanced towards *Christiania* the capital of the Kingdom: and fortune began again to smile on him in this part of the world: but he never took a proper care to subsist his troops, while an army and fleet of *Danes* were coming to defend *Norway*. *Charles* for want of provisions was forced to retire to *Sweden*, there to wait the issue of his Minister's designs.

The affair required the utmost secrecy and vast preparations, two things almost incompatible. But *Goerts* contrived to fetch them from the *Asiatick* seas. And however odious in appearance the means might be, they were proper enough



nough for the purpose of a descent in *Scotland*, and at least would procure men and money, and ships for *Sweden*.

There had been Pirates of all nations, especially *English*, who were in association infesting the seas of *Europe* and *America*. No quarter was given them, and they had retired to *Madagascar*, a large island on the east of *Africk*: Being quite desperate and famous for actions, which wanted nothing but justice to make them heroic. They looked for a Prince who would receive them under his protection; but the law of nations had shut them out from every harbour in the world.

When they knew that *Charles* was come back to *Sweden*, they had great hopes, that he being a Prince who was fond of war, and forced to be so engaged, and wanting a fleet and soldiers, would be glad of a composition with them upon easy terms; so they sent a person in a *Dutch* ship to propose to Baron *Goerts* that they might be received at *Gottenbourg*, where they promised to be ready with threescore ships loaded with treasures.

The Baron brought the King into the business, and *Kromstrom* and *Mendal*, two *Swedish* Gentlemen, were sent soon after to transact it with them.

But a more honourable and likely help was afterwards found in Cardinal *Alberoni*, an extraordinary Genius, who managed the affairs of *Spain* long enough for his own reputation, though not for the good and glory of that kingdom.

He came with great willingness into the proposal of setting *James* the second's pretended son upon the throne of *England*. However, as he



was but just come into the Ministry, and *Spain* was to be settled before he could pretend to overturn other kingdoms, there was no great likelihood of his being able to put a hand to the work for a long time; yet in less than two years he had done so much for *Spain*, that she made quite another figure in *Europe*; and they say, the *Turks* were engaged to fall upon the Emperor, and measures taken to depose the Duke of *Orleans* from the Regency of *France*, and King *George* from the throne of *Great-Britain*: such danger there is in a single man, who has an absolute power in any country, and has likewise the sense and spirit to make use of it.

*Goerts*, having thus scatter'd in the courts of *Moscow* and *Spain* the first sparks of the flame he intended to kindle, went privately to *France*, and from thence to *Holland*, where he saw the adherents to the *Pretender's* party.

He was well informed of the strength, the number, and disposition of the disaffected in *England*, what money they could raise, and what men they could bring into the field. They asked no more than ten thousand men, and were pretty sure of success, if they had but that assistance.

Count *Gillenbourg*, the *Swedish* Ambassador in *England*, instructed by *Goerts*, had several meetings at *London*; he gave them great encouragement, and promised all they could wish. The *Pretender's* friends with the chief of the disaffected party went so far as to advance considerable sums, which *Goerts* received in *Holland*. He negotiated the purchase of several ships, and bought six in *Great-Britain* with all sorts of ammunition.

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Then he sent privately some officers to *France*, particularly the *Chevalier de Folard*, who having made thirty campaigns in the *French* service, without improving his fortune, had been to offer his service to the King of *Sweden*, not with any considerable views of interest, but rather to serve under a King of that surprizing reputation. *Folard* likewise hoped to recommend to that Prince the new discoveries he had made in the art of war, which he had always studied as a Philosopher, and has since published his discoveries in a commentary on *Polybius*. *Charles* was pleased with his notions, and as he himself made war in a manner entirely new, was never governed by custom, he intended to make use of the *Chevalier de Folard* in his descent on *Scotland*. This Gentleman performed in *France* all the secret orders of *Goerts*. A great many *French*, but more *Irish* officers, came into this new design, which was working at the same time in *England*, *France*, *Spain* and *Moscovy*; and the branches of it privately spread throughout all *Europe*.

But all these preparations were nothing to *Baron de Goerts*, though pretty well for a beginning. The main point without which there could be no success was, to settle a peace between the *Czar* and *Charles*; and many difficulties there were in the way. The *Baron Osterman*, minister of that state in *Moscovy*, was not so ready to agree with *Goerts*. He was as cautious as the other was warm. One was for letting things ripen by degrees; the other would reap as well as sow at once. *Osterman* was afraid his master, being pleased with the design, would grant terms



too advantageous to *Sweden*; and so delayed the conclusion of the affair.

Very luckily for *Goerts* the Czar himself came to *Holland* in the beginning of the year 1717, his design was to visit *France*, and he had a desire to see that famous nation which for above a Century past has been censured, envied, and imitated by all its neighbours: He there intended to satisfy his curiosity of seeing and learning; and to exercise his politicks.

*Goerts* had two conferences with the Emperor at the *Hague*, and by that made a better progress than he could have done in six months with Plenipotentiaries. Every thing went well. His great designs appeared impenetrable; and he hoped they would only be discovered in the execution. All his discourse at the *Hague* turned upon peace, and he openly declared that he regarded the King of *Great-Britain* as the dispenser of pacification in the north; and he pressed exceedingly to have a congress at *Brunswick*, where the interests of *Sweden* and its enemies might be settled amicably.

The first who discovered these intrigues was the Duke of *Orleans*, Regent of *France*: For he had spies in all the courts of *Europe*. These sort of men, whose trade it is to sell the secrets of their friends, and who get their living by being informers, and frequently by publishing calumnies, were mightily encreased in his time in *France*; so that one half of the kingdom were spies upon the other. The Duke, having personal obligations to the King of *England*, made a discovery of the whole design against him.



At the same time the *Hollanders* taking umbrage at *Goerts's* behaviour, communicated their suspicions to the *English* Ministry. *Goerts* and *Gillenbourg* were going on briskly, when one was seized at the *Hague*, and the other in *London*.

*Gillenbourg* as Ambassador from *Sweden*, having offended against the law of nations by this conspiracy against a prince to whom he was sent in a publick character, they did not scruple in *England* the violation of his person. But it was thought exceeding strange in the States General to imprison the Baron *de Goerts* out of mere complaisance to the King of *England*. Nay, they went so far as to appoint Count *Velderen* to question him. This was carrying it very far; but as they could make nothing of it, it only turned to their own confusion. *Goerts* asked the Count *de Velderen*, if he knew him? Yes, Sir, says the Dutchman. Well then, says the Baron *de Goerts*, if you do, you must needs know that I shall say but just what I please. Such a thing was scarce ever heard of before; all the foreign Ministers, particularly the Marquis *de Monteleone*, the Spanish Ambassador in *England*, protested against the wrong done to the persons of *Goerts* and *Gillenbourg*. Nothing could excuse the *Hollanders* for breaking a law so sacred, in seizing the King of *Sweden's* Prime Minister, who had never done any thing against them; and to act so directly contrary to that valuable freedom, which has brought among them so many foreigners, and has been the only cause of all their greatness.

The King of *England* had done no more than right in seizing an enemy: What they found among *Gillenbourg's* papers of letters between him and



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and *Goerts* were printed to justify the King's proceedings. The King of *Sweden* was in *Scania*, when the printed letters came with the news of his Minister's being seized. He only smiled, and asked, *if his letters were printed too?* And ordered the *English* Resident, and all his family at *Stockholm*, to be seized. But he could not take the same revenge upon the *Dutch*, because they had no Minister then at the Court of *Sweden*. However, he took no notice one way or other of the thing; for he was too haughty to deny what he had once approved; and wiser than to own a project that had proved abortive; so he kept a disdainful silence towards *England* and *Holland*.

The Czar's behaviour was quite otherwise. As he was not named but only hinted at by distant intimations in the letters of *Goerts* and *Gillenbourg*, he wrote a long letter full of civilities to the King of *Great-Britain* upon the discovery, with great assurances of his sincere friendship. King *George* received his protestations without crediting them, tho' he seemed to suffer himself to be persuaded of their reality, and pretended to believe them. A plot laid by private men, if once it's blown, is at an end; but where Kings are concerned, a discovery does but make it go on the faster. The Czar came to *Paris* in *May* 1717. and had something to do besides seeing the wonders of art and nature there; the academies, the publick libraries, the cabinets of the curious, and the royal palaces. He made a proposal to the Regent, which, had it been complied with, might have completed the greatness of the *Moscovites*. His design was to make peace

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with the King of *Sweden*, who would yield to him many great countries: To take from the *Danes* their power in the *Baltick*: To weaken the *English* by a civil war; and bring to *Moscovy* all the commerce of the North. He had thoughts too of setting up *Stanislaus* against King *Augustus*; so that the fire being kindled every where, he might be able to blow it up or damp it, as he should see occasion. With this view he proposed to the Regent to be a Mediator between *Sweden* and *Moscovy*, and to come to an alliance offensive and defensive with them and *Spain*. This treaty, though so very natural, and for the good of those nations, and though it would put the balance of *Europe* into their hands, was yet rejected by the Duke of *Orleans*: For he did exactly the reverse of all this, making a league with the Emperor and the King of *England*. Reasons of state had then such influence over all Princes, that the Czar was going to declare war against his old ally *Augustus*, and to take part with *Charles* his mortal enemy; while *France* in favour of the *English* and *Germans*, was going to war with a grandson of *Louis* the XIVth, after having so long supported him against those very enemies at such expence of blood and treasure. All that the Czar could get by this application, was, that the Regent should interpose for the enlargement of Baron *Goerts* and *Gillenburg*. He returned to *Moscovy* about the end of *June*, having shewn *France* a rare example of an Emperor travelling for instruction. But most of the people in *France* saw nothing of him but a rough unpolished outside, the effects of his education, while the Legislator, and the great Man



Man who had founded a new nation, quite escaped their observation.

What he looked for from the Duke of *Orleans*, he quickly found in Cardinal *Alberoni*, who now governed all in *Spain*. *Alberoni* wished for nothing more than to establish the *Pretender*; first, as he was a Minister of *Spain* which had been so ill used by the *English*; then as having a personal pique against the Duke of *Orleans* for his close alliance with *England* against *Spain*; besides, that he was a Priest of that church, for which the *Pretender's* father has so injudiciously lost his crown.

The Duke of *Ormond*, as much loved in *England*, as the Duke of *Marlborough* was admired, had left his country at the time of King *George's* accession, and was now in *Spain*. He went with full commission from the King of *Spain* and the *Pretender*, to meet the Czar upon his way to *Mittau* in *Courland*, and had with him one *Fernegan*, an *Englishman* of sense and spirit. The business was to ask the Princess *Anna Petrona*, the Czar's Daughter, in marriage for King *James's* pretended son, in hopes that such an alliance would bring the Czar into the interest of that Prince. This proposal had like to have marred, instead of mending matters; for Baron *Goerts*, among the rest of his schemes, had long intended this Lady for the Duke of *Holstein*, who married her afterwards. As soon as he heard of the Duke of *Ormond's* negotiation, he grew jealous, and did all he could to defeat it. He was set at liberty in *August*, and so was Count *Gillenberg*, without the King of *Sweden* so much as offering any excuse to the King of *England*, or expressing



expressing the least dislike of what his Minister had been doing.

At the same time the *English* Resident, and all his family at *Stockholm*, were released, where their treatment had been a great deal worse than *Gillenbourg's* at *London*.

When *Goerts* had obtained his Liberty he became an implacable enemy; for besides his other views, he wanted now to be revenged. He went post to the Czar, who was better pleased than ever with him; for he undertook in less than three months, with but one Plenipotentiary from *Moscovy*, to remove all obstructions to a peace with *Sweden*. He takes up a map of the Czar's own drawing, and making a line from *Wibourg* by the lake *Ladoga*, quite to the frozen ocean, promised to bring his Master to part with all that lay to the East of that line, besides *Carelia*, *Ingria*, and *Livonia*. Then he began upon the marriage of the Czar's daughter to the Duke of *Holstein*, giving great hopes that the Duke would readily surrender to him his country for an equivalent: and if once he got to be a member of the empire, the imperial crown would come of course to him or some of his descendants. Thus he pleased the Czar's ambition, took the *Pretender's* Mistress from him, but opened a way for him in *England*, and brought about the whole of all his own designs at once.

The Czar named the isle of *Aland* for the conference between *Osterman* and *Goerts*; and desired the Duke of *Ormond* to return to *Spain*, lest the *English* Court should take the alarm; for he had no mind to break with them till the time  
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of the invasion. But *Fernegan* the Duke's confident, who was to manage matters, stay'd at *Petersburg*, lodging very privately, and going only out of nights, and whenever he saw any of the Czar's Ministers, it was always in the disguise of a peasant or a *Tartar*.

As soon as the Duke of *Ormond* went, the Czar took care to make a merit of it to the King of *England*, that he sent away the greatest man of the *Pretender's* party. And the Baron *de Goerts* returned to *Sweden* with great hopes of success.

He found his master at the head of 30000 regular troops, and all the coast guarded by the militia. The King wanted nothing but money; but publick credit was lost at home and abroad: *France* had afforded him some subsidies in the latter days of *Louis XIV.* but the Duke of *Orleans* having other views, would give him none. He was promised some from *Spain*; but that country was not yet in a condition to supply him. Baron *Goerts* upon this set on foot a project he had tried before he went to *France* and *Holland*. It was, to make a piece of copper, of the same value as silver: So that a half-penny, with the Prince's mark, might pass for thirty or forty pence: As sometimes the Governors of besieged towns have paid their soldiers and the people in leather money, till they could get better. This sort of money, made at an emergency, which can never have any credit if it be not punctually made good, is no better than bills, whose imaginary value may easily exceed the fund of money that any State is worth.



Such expedients are of excellent use in a free country, and have been the saving often of a Republick; but in a Monarchy nothing can be more destructive; for the people quickly growing suspicious the minister is reduced to the necessity of being unpunctual to his word, the imaginary money encreases fast upon them; and those, who have any species by them, secure it under ground; which makes the whole machine fall to confusion, not without great mischief. This was then the case of *Sweden*.

Baron *Goerts* had paid out his new coin with a good deal of discretion: But was quickly carried beyond his first design by the rapidity of a motion which he knew not how to govern. All sorts of goods and provisions were grown excessive dear, so that he was obliged to multiply his copper coin. The more there was of it, the less the value was; and the country found it such a grievance, that the general cry rose against Baron *Goerts*. Such was the veneration the people had for *Charles*, that they could not hate him; but the weight of their displeasure fell upon his Minister, who being a foreigner, and at the head of the treasury, was sure to suffer under the publick hatred.

A tax that he intended on the Clergy completed all. The Priests are but too apt to make it God's cause whenever they are touched; and cried him down for an arrant atheist; because he attempted to meddle with their money; and the new money being stamped with the figures of heathen Gods, they took occasion from thence to call those pieces, the Gods of Baron *Goerts*.



The Ministry, growing jealous of him, fell in with this universal hatred: And the less their power was, they were the more implacable. The King's sister and the Prince her husband had reason to fear, that his birth obliging him to befriend the Duke of *Holstein*, he might bring it about at last to make him King of *Sweden*. Never any in the nation liked him but the King, who was the more confirmed in his good liking by the publick hatred. He confided in him with entire resignation, giving him absolute power at home; and trusting to him without reserve in all transactions with the Czar, especially as to the conference at *Aland*, which of all things he wished him to press with the utmost expedition.

The affairs of the treasury demanding his attendance and immediate care, as soon as ever he had put them on a tolerable foot, he went away directly to finish with *Osterman* the great work he had in hand.

And these were the preliminaries of that alliance, which was to have wholly changed the face of affairs in *Europe*, as they were found after *Goerts's* death among his papers.

The Czar was to keep all *Livonia*, part of *Ingria* and *Carelia*, leaving all the rest to *Sweden*. He was to join with *Charles* in restoring *Stanislaus* in *Poland*, sending thither 80000 men, to dethrone that very King on whose side he had been fighting for ten years before; he was to furnish ships to carry 10000 *Swedes* to *Germany*, and thirty thousand into *Germany*. The forces of both were to fall upon the King of *England's* *German* dominions, especially those of *Bremen* and *Verden*; the same troops were to restore the



Duke of *Holstein*, and force the King of *Prussia* to an accommodation, by parting with a good deal of his new acquisitions. *Charles* began to take upon him as if his own victorious troops, joined by the Czar's, had done all this: and insisted with the Emperor to execute the treaty of *Altranstadt*. But the court of *Vienna* would scarce vouchsafe an answer to a proposal from one of whom they had so little to fear.

The King of *Poland* was not altogether so secure, but saw the storm a coming. The *Polish* nobility had formed a confederacy against him, and he had been obliged ever since his Re-establishment on the throne, to be engaged in wars or treaties with his own subjects. The Czar, who was now become a dangerous-mediator, was much to be feared, for he had an hundred gallies near *Dantzick* and 40000 men hovering upon the frontiers of *Poland*. All the north was full of jealousy and apprehensions. *Fleming* the most distrustful man living, and of all men living the most to be distrusted, was the first who suspected the designs of the Czar and King of *Sweden* in favour of King *Stanislaus*; so he endeavoured to have this Prince seized in the Dutchy of *Deux-Ponts*, as *James Sobieski* had been surprized before in *Silesia*.

*Saissan*, one of those turbulent and enterprising *Frenchmen* who wander into foreign countries to try their fortune, had lately brought several of his countrymen like himself into the service of the King of *Poland*. He imparted to *Fleming* a Project, by which he undertook to go with thirty *French* officers, whom he had wrought into such a disposition, that they were deter-



determined to seize *Stanislaus* in his Palace, and convey him a prisoner to *Dresden*. This project was received with approbation; enterprizes of that nature were very frequent in those days. Some of those wretches, who in *Italy* are called *Bravos*, had acted such a scene in the *Milanese*, during the last war between *Germany* and *France*: And even since that transaction several *Frenchmen*, who had fled to *Holland* for refuge, had the presumption to penetrate as far as *Versailles*, with an intention to carry off the *Dauphin*, and they seized the person of the first equerry, almost under the windows of the castle where *Lewis* the fourteenth resided.

*Saissan*, in pursuance of his project, had disposed his men and post horses in order to surprise *Stanislaus*; but the enterprize was discovered the night before its intended execution. Several of the associates knew what had happened, and some were seized. They could not expect to be treated like prisoners of war, but rather as *Banditti* but *Stanislaus*, instead of punishing them suitably to their demerit, contented himself with reproaching them with an amiable intermixture of goodness and humanity. He even distributed money among them to defray their expences in their return to *Poland*, and made it apparent, by this generous proceeding, that his rival *Augustus* had reason to fear him.

In the mean time *Charles* was going to make a second attempt upon *Norway*, in *October* 1718, and he had laid matters so, that he did not doubt to be master of that kingdom in six months. He rather chose to go and conquer rocks, amidst snow and ice, in the severity of the winter which  
kills



kills the very animals even in *Sweden*, where the air is less rigorous, than regain his beautiful provinces in *Germany*; but he hoped his new alliance with the Czar would soon put him in a condition to retake them. Besides his ambition was pleased with the thought of forcing a kingdom from his conquering enemy.

At the mouth of the river *Tistendall*, near the bay of *Denmark*, between the towns of *Babus* and *Anflo*, stands *Fredericshall*, a place of great strength and importance, which is reckoned to be the key of that kingdom. *Charles* sat down before it in the month of *December*. The cold was so extreme, that the soldiers could hardly break the ground. They might as well have opened trenches in a rock; but the *Swedes* never thought much of any fatigues in which they saw their King take his share so readily; and *Charles* himself never suffered more than now. His constitution by eighteen years labour was hardened to that degree, that he would sleep in the open field in *Norway*, in the midst of winter, upon boards or straw, covered only with his cloke, without prejudicing his health. Several of the soldiers in their posts fell down dead with cold, and others who were ready to die durst not complain when they saw their King bear what they suffered. A little before this expedition, hearing of a woman in *Scania*, named *Joan Datter*, who had lived several months upon nothing but water; he, who had studied all his life to bear the worst extremes that human nature can support, was resolved to try how long he was able to fast. He neither eat nor drank for five days, and on the sixth, in the morning, he rid



two leagues, and then alighted at the tent of his brother-in-law the Prince of *Hesse*, where he eat very heartily, without feeling the least disorder, either from his long fasting, or his full eating afterward.

With such a body of iron, and a soul of so much strength and courage, in every condition, there was not one of all his neighbours who did not fear him.

On the 11th of *December*, being *St. Andrew's* day, he went about nine at night to see the trenches; and finding the parallel not advanced to his mind, he was a little displeased; but *Monf. Megret*, a *French* engineer, who conducted the siege, assured him, the place would be taken in eight days time. *We shall see*, says the King, and going on with the engineer to examine the works, he stopped at a place where the *boyau* made an angle with the parallel, and kneeling upon the inner *talus*, he leaned with his elbows on the parapet, to look upon the men who were carrying on the trenches by starlight.

The least circumstances that relate to the death of so great a man as *Charles* the XIIth are very important. I must therefore take upon me to say, that all the conversation which has been reported by several writers, and *M. de lay Motraye* among the rest, to have passed between the King and *Megret* the engineer, is absolutely false. And the following account is what I know to be the truth of this event.

The King stood with half his body exposed to a battery of cannon exactly levelled at the angle where he was. Two *Frenchmen* were all who were then near his person, one was *Monfieur Siker*



*Siker* his Aid-de-camp, a man of great courage and conduct, who came into his service in *Turky*; and was particularly attached to the Prince of *Hesse*; the other was this engineer. The cannon fired upon them with chain-shot, to which the King stood most exposed. Not far behind was Count *Swerin*, who commanded the trenches. Count *Posse*, Captain of the guards, and one *Kulbert* an Aid-de-camp received his orders. *Siker* and *Megret* saw the King fall upon the parapet, fetching a deep sigh. They ran to him, but he was already dead. A ball of half a pound had struck him on the right temple, and made a hole big enough to turn their fingers in. His head lying over the parapet, the left eye was beat in, and the right was forced quite out of its socket. He was dead the moment he received this; but he had the force in that instant to put his hand by a natural motion to the guard of his sword, and lay in that posture. At this, *Megret*, a man of great indifference, only said, *Let us be going, the play is done.* *Siker* ran immediately, and told Count *Swerin*, and they all agreed to keep it private till the Prince of *Hesse* could be informed of it. They covered the corps with a gray cloke; *Siker* put him on his hat and wig, and he was carried by the name of Captain *Carlbern* through the troops, who saw their dead King pass, little thinking who it was.

The Prince gave orders presently that none should stir out of the camp, and that all the passes to *Sweden* should be guarded, till he could take measures for his wife to claim the crown, and to exclude the Duke of *Holstein*, who might possibly pretend to it.

Thus



## CHARLES XII. 317

Thus fell *Charles XII.* King of *Sweden*, at the age of six and thirty years and a half, having known the extremes of prosperity, and of adversity, without being softened by the one, or in the least disturbed for a moment at the other. All his actions, even those of his private life, are almost beyond any measure of probability. Perhaps he was the only man, to be sure he was the only King, who ever had lived without weakness. He carried all the virtues of a Hero to that excess, that they became as dangerous as any of the opposite vices. His resolution grown to obstinacy occasioned his misfortunes in *Ukraina*, and kept him five years in *Turky*. His liberality degenerating into profusion ruined *Sweden*. His courage growing into rashness was the occasion of his death. His justice has been sometimes cruelty: and in his latter years, the maintaining his prerogative came not far short of tyranny. His great qualities, any one of which had been enough to make another Prince immortal, were a misfortune to his country. He never began a quarrel with any, but he was rather implacable than wise in his resentment. He was the first who ever had the ambition to be a conqueror, without wishing to encrease his dominions. His desire to gain kingdoms was only that he might give them away. The passion he had for glory, for war, and for revenge, made him too little of a politician, without which the world never before saw any Prince a conqueror. Before a battle he was full of confidence; exceeding modest after a victory, and in a defeat undaunted. Sparing others no more than himself, he made a small account of his own or his subjects



subjects lives or labours ; a man extraordinary rather than a great man, and fitter to be admired than imitated. His life however may be a lesson to Kings, and teach them, that a peaceful and happy Government is more to be desired than so much glory.

*Charles XII.* was tall and nobly shaped, he had a fine forehead, large blue eyes full of sweetness, and a handsome nose : but the lower part of his face was disagreeable, and often disfigured by a frequent laugh which hardly opened his lips ; he had little beard or hair ; he spoke little, and it was habitual to him to answer only with that laugh. At his table there was always great silence. With all that inflexible temper of his, he was timorous and bashful, and would have been at a loss in conversation, for having given himself so wholly up to war, he knew but little of society. Before his long leisure in *Turky*, he had never read any thing but *Cæsar's* Commentaries and the history of *Alexander*. But he had writ some observations upon war and his own campaigns, from 1700 to 1709, which he owned to the *Chevalier de Folard*, and said the manuscript was lost at the unfortunate battle of *Pultowa*.

As to religion, though the sentiments of a Prince ought not to influence those of other men ; and the opinion of a King so little informed as *Charles*, can be of no great weight in such matters ; yet it is proper that men's curiosity should be satisfied in this as well as other particulars concerning him. I have it from the Gentleman who gave me most of the materials of this history, that *Charles* was a serious *Lutheran* till the year

1707;



1707; he then saw the famous Philosopher *Monf. Leibnitz* at *Leipsick*, who was a great free-thinker, and talked very freely, having instilled his notions into more Princes than one. *Charles* learned from the conversation of this Philosopher a good deal of indifference for *Lutheranism*; which he carried afterwards much farther, when he had more time in *Turky*, and had seen so many sorts of professions.

Of all his old opinions he retained but one, which was absolute predestination, a doctrine that favoured his courage, and justified his temerity. The Czar had much the same opinions as to religion and fate: But he was more free to talk of them, as he did indeed of every thing else with his favourites very familiarly; for he had this advantage over *Charles*, that he had studied Philosophy, and was a good speaker.

I cannot help taking notice here of a slander that is too often spread by credulous or ill meaning people, who will have it, that when Princes die, they were either poisoned or assassinated. And the story went in *Germany*, that *Monsieur Siker* was the man who killed the King of *Sweden*. That brave Officer was very uneasy at the calumny a good while: And one day talking of it to me, he said these very words, *I might have killed the King of Sweden, but I had such a veneration for the hero, that tho' I had intended it, I could not offer to do it.*

As soon as he was dead, the siege of *Fredericshall* was raised. The *Swedes*, who thought his glory rather a burthen than a happiness, made peace with all their neighbours as fast as they could; and soon put an end to that absolute power,



power, which Baron *Goerts* had made them weary of. The States went to a free election of King *Charles's* sister for their Queen; and obliged her solemnly to renounce all hereditary right to the crown, that she might hold it only by the people's choice. She promised with repeated oaths never to set up arbitrary power. And afterwards, her love of power giving way to conjugal affection, she yielded the crown to her husband, and brought the States to choose him, who ascended the throne upon the same conditions.

Baron *Goerts* was seized immediately upon *Charles's* death, and condemned by the Senate of *Stockholm* to be beheaded under the gallows; an instance rather of revenge than justice: And a cruel insult on the memory of a King whom *Sweden* yet admires.

THE END.



II.

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A

# LETTER

To the Right Honourable the

Lord \* \* \* \* \*

GIVING

A description of the Persons, Behaviour, &c. of the King of *Sweden*, King *Augustus*, and King *Stanislaus*.

I Will tell you as a particular friend (and  
“ that even without leave, which ought to  
“ have been) I did venture the other day  
“ to ramble into *Saxony* to satisfy my curiosity,  
“ in seeing those different Kings there, and pe-  
“ netrating as far as I could how matters stood  
“ there, and how our fate is like to be deter-  
“ mined by that *Gothic* Hero, who with a  
“ handful of men makes himself dreaded and  
“ courted by all the powers of *Europe*. As for  
“ his person, he did not *dementiri* the descrip-  
“ tion I had of him; he is a tall handsome Gen-  
“ tleman, but immoderately dirty and slovenly;  
“ his behaviour and carriage more rustick than  
“ you



“ you can imagine in so young a man should be.  
“ And that the outside of his quarters should not  
“ bely the inside, he has chosen the dirtiest place  
“ and one of the saddest houses in all *Saxony*;  
“ the cleanest place is the court before the house,  
“ where every body is to alight off their horses,  
“ and is up to the knees in dirt, where his hor-  
“ ses stand with hardly any halters, and sackings  
“ instead of clothes, without either racks or  
“ mangers. The horses have rough coats, thick  
“ bellies, switch tails; the grooms that look  
“ after them seem not to be better clothed nor  
“ better kept than their horses; one of which  
“ stands always saddled for the mighty Monarch,  
“ who runs out commonly alone, and bestrides  
“ his steed, and away he gallops before any one  
“ else is able to follow him: Sometimes he will  
“ go ten or twelve of those country miles in a  
“ day, which is about forty or fifty of our *English*  
“ miles, now in the winter time, bespattered  
“ all over with dirt like a postilion. I should  
“ make my letter too long, if I should tell you  
“ his dress, his eating and sleeping. But not to  
“ let it entirely alone, I will tell you his coat is  
“ plain blue with ordinary brass buttons, the  
“ skirts pinned up behind and before, which  
“ shews his Majesty's old leather waistcoat and  
“ breeches, which they tell me are sometimes  
“ so greasy, that they may be fried: But when  
“ I saw him they were almost new, for he had  
“ been a gallant a little before, and had been to  
“ see King *Augustus's* Queen, upon her return  
“ to *Leipsick*; and to be fine, he put on those  
“ new leather breeches, spoke not above three  
“ words to her, but talked to a foolish dwarf  
“ she



“ she had about a quarter of an hour, and then  
“ left her. He wears a black crape cravat, but  
“ the cape of his coat is buttoned so close a-  
“ bout it, that you cannot see whether he has  
“ any or no: his shirt and wristbands are com-  
“ monly very dirty, for he wears no ruffles,  
“ nor gloves, but on horseback: His hands are  
“ commonly of the same colour with his wristbands,  
“ so that you can hardly distinguish them; his  
“ hair is light brown, very greasy and very short,  
“ never combed but with his fingers. He sits  
“ upon any stool or chair he finds in the  
“ house, without ceremony at dinner, and be-  
“ gins with a great piece of bread and butter,  
“ having stuck his napkin under his chin; then  
“ drinks with his mouth full out of a great  
“ silver old fashioned beaker small beer, which  
“ is his only liquor; at every meal he drinks a-  
“ bout two *English* bottles full, for he empties  
“ his beaker twice; between every bit of meat  
“ he eats a piece of bread and butter, which he  
“ spreads with his thumbs. He is never above  
“ a quarter of an hour at dinner; eats like a  
“ horse, speaks not one word all the while. As  
“ soon as he rises, his life-guards sit down at the  
“ same table to the same victuals. His bed-  
“ chamber is a very little dirty room, with bare  
“ walls, no sheets nor canopy to his bed; but  
“ the same quilt that lyes under him turns up o-  
“ ver him, and so covers him. His writing-  
“ table is a slit deal, and only a stick to sup-  
“ port it; and instead of a standish, a wooden  
“ thing with a sand-box of the same. He has  
“ a fine gilt bible by his bed-side, the only thing  
“ that looks fine in his equipage. He is a very  
“ handsome



“ handsome man, well shaped, and a very good  
 “ face, no stern countenance, but he is very  
 “ whimsical and positive, which makes all the  
 “ allies afraid of him; for he risques himself and  
 “ his army, as easily as another would fight a  
 “ duel. He has not shewn much generosity to  
 “ King *Augustus*, who sent *Charte Blanche* to  
 “ make peace, and to recommend himself to  
 “ his friendship; but does still every day very  
 “ hard things to that poor Prince, whom he  
 “ treats always like one whom he has entirely in  
 “ his power.

“ King *Augustus* is as well bred a man as you  
 “ shall see, very obliging in his person and be-  
 “ haviour, and liked by every one. But now  
 “ he pays for all his false, unfaithful politicks,  
 “ and finds, too late, that one Prince should not  
 “ entirely submit to another. But that my let-  
 “ ter is too long already, I would give you some  
 “ account of the *Polish* Court of King *Stanislaus*;  
 “ for being *incognito*, (only with a friend and one  
 “ servant) impossible to be known, I took a  
 “ tour to *Leipsick*, where I not only saw that  
 “ King, but he very civilly came and spake to  
 “ me and my friend, seeing we were strangers.  
 “ His Court has a much better air than that of  
 “ his Maker; and his mother and wife were  
 “ there, a couple of well bred women, well dress-  
 “ ed, and both spoke very good *French*. He is  
 “ a tall handsome young man, with a great pair  
 “ of whiskers, in the *Polish* dress, inclinable to  
 “ be fat, and a little upon the dirty, as all the  
 “ *Poles* are. He was lodged in a very pretty  
 “ castle belonging to King *Augustus*, but against  
 “ that



" that King's will, who will never see him, and  
" cannot abide to hear him spoke of ; and yet  
" the *Swedes* would oblige him, which they say  
" he ought to do by the treaty.

" You used to tell me, my dear Lord, you  
" loved to hear of my rambles, and I believe  
" this may please you better than my former,  
" being a very true description of this *mighty*  
" *and dirty Monarch.*

P

PITCAIRN

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PITCARNII EPIGRAMMA.

**C**AROLE, Gothorum longe fortissime ductor,  
Gallica cui solum detinet ora parem;  
Perjuros hostes, & barbara numina temne  
Sauromatùm, & dextro confice coepta pede.  
Dî te victorem mox in tua regna reducent,  
Et patriam nulli non pietate parem.  
Sis felix, faveasque bonis, Suecissime Caesar,  
Sic faveat Lodoix Gallo-Britanna tibi.

Incerti cujusdam EPIGRAMMA.

**H**ERCULIS invadunt colubri incunabula Sueci;  
Sibilat hinc Moschus, Danus & inde tumet;  
Versicolor linguam jaculatur Saxo trifurcam:  
Sed puer intrepidâ compremittit ora manu.  
Nate Jovis laurum CAROLO concede; duorum  
Tu tantum caneris victor, at ille trium.



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FINIS.

MUSEVM  
BRITAN  
NICVM

